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POSTHUMOUS WORKS

OF THE

REV. THOMAS CHALMERS, D.D., LL.D.

EDITED BY THE

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SERMONS

BY THE LATE

THOMAS CHALMERS, D.D., LL.D.

ILLUSTRATIVE OF DIFFERENT STAGES IN HIS MINISTRY.

1798-1847.

NEW YORK:
HARPER & BROTHERS, PUBLISHERS,
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PREFACE.

Dr. Chalmers was licensed as a preacher of the gospel by the Presbytery of St. Andrews on the 31st July, 1799. In December, 1801, he became assistant to the Rev. Mr. Elliot, minister of Cavers, a parish lying along the banks of the Teviot, a few miles from Hawick. As Mr. Elliot was laid aside by his infirmities, the pulpit duties devolved wholly upon his assistant, after a regular discharge of which for a period of about nine months, Dr. Chalmers left Cavers in September, 1802. He was ordained as minister of the parish of Kilmany, in Fifeshire, on the 12th of May, 1803; and twelve of the most important and most fruitful years of his life were spent in this peaceful retreat. In the autumn of 1815, he was removed to Glasgow, in which city eight years of incessant but triumphant toil were devoted to all the different kinds of ministerial labor. In November, 1823, he finally resigned the pulpit for the professor's chair. He was twenty-three years of age at the date of his ordination, and forty-three when he gave up his charge—his ministry as an ordained clergyman covering thus the space of twenty years.

From the large mass of his pulpit preparations Dr. Chalmers had already selected those discourses which seemed to him the worthiest of being published—the likeliest by their publication to do good. Out of the remainder it might have been perilous—it would perhaps have been improper—to have selected so many as thirty-three new sermons, and to have presented them as of

equal or kindred merit with those already issued through the press. It occurred to me, however, in reading over this class of his manuscripts, that without injury done to his usefulness or reputation as a preacher, a two-fold—a literary as well as a religious—object might be attained by the publication of a series of them arranged in chronological order.

It was as a preacher that Dr. Chalmers first reached celebrity. His earlier authorship had failed to make any deep impression on the public mind. His Treatise on the "Evidences of Christianity" had begun to attract attention, and would finally have secured to him a high place among the defenders of the Christian faith; but it was the publication of his "Astronomical Discourses" which at once raised him to a pinnacle of higher eminence, gave to him a larger audience, and won for him a larger influence than it had been the lot of any Scottish minister from the days of the Reformation to enjoy. In these discourses, whose eloquence filled all eyes with its dazzling splendor, and opened all lips to praise, an idiomatic peculiarity of phraseology was at once observable. Under this new employer of it, our language took new forms, and showed itself capable of rendering new services; and while critics said of this new way of wielding words that it was neither strictly accurate nor classically elegant, it was universally felt and confessed that by an easy use and mastery of words and phrases which in other hands had been unmanageable, Dr. Chalmers possessed a rare, an unequaled power of setting forth his ideas in a multitude of changing phases, varying in a thousand ways the form of their presentation, not only without any injury to, but with positive and large enhancement of effect. There was an interminable but unwearying variety—a volu-

minous amplitude which yet never passed into the turgid —the life-blood of a quick intelligence or a most fervid emotion "circulating vitality to the last extremities of expression—to the minutest ramifications of phrase."

But this style of writing, how came it to be adopted and employed? Had it an infancy, a growth? And if so, what was its earliest, its infant condition—and how rose it to such a stately muturity? This volume is presented as a help to him who would prosecute such inquiries. It furnishes him with the means of tracing up very nearly to its fountain-head, that full flowing river whose many-waved bosom has borne so many thousands so triumphantly along. He does not indeed here see that stream rolling at its largest breadth and with its fullest volume—for that it is to the Astronomical, or some other of the already published discourses, that he must look. Nor does he see it, as within narrower banks but with waters purer, deeper, stillier—with more of heaven's own pure light upon them, it ran on when near its close—for that it is to the *Horæ Sabbaticæ* that he must look—but we raise him here to a stand-point whence he can see it through a longer period of its course, and trace it through more of its variations than previously lay open to his eye.

It is mainly, however, with a hope that, in the form given to it, this volume may serve as a contribution to the religious biography of Dr. Chalmers, that it is put into the reader's hands. Before him here, and within comparatively narrow compass, he has a series of compositions between the date of the first and the last of which an interval of very nearly half a century occurs. Had the topics treated of in these writings belonged even to any branch of a purely speculative philosophy, it

would have interested us to follow, through so long a line of progress, the advancing footsteps of an intellect gifted with such superior power, and urged on by so simple and so strong love of truth; and that interest would have been quickened into a heightened intensity had we been informed beforehand that, at a certain stage in his progress a singular revolution had taken place in the opinions and sentiments of the inquirer. But the topics dwelt upon throughout this volume—God, and the revelations He has made of Himself to man, man and his awful relationships with God and eternity—are no matters of mere barren speculation. According to the manner in which they are approached and dealt with by each of us they affect, closely and influentially, our state and character here, our prospects for eternity. It was in this light they were looked upon by the departed author of these writings. It is generally known that some years after his settlement at Kilmany, a revolution happened which altered the whole spirit, course, and object of his life and ministry. He himself believed, that upon the change which then took place his own salvation hinged. He believed that had that change not been realized, he should have stood at last hopelessly condemned at that tribunal before which he has now appeared. Although before that change his faith in the divine origin of Christianity was intelligent and entire—though all the doctrines which our standards teach were fully and unequivocally admitted by him—though as to all the external proprieties of professional conduct, and many of the most attractive virtues of social life, he might have challenged a comparison with the great majority of the men among whom he lived,—yet was it his conviction that the faith which bringeth salvation had not till then been formed—

the true and only ground of a sinner's acceptance with God had not been occupied and rested on—the true and only preparation for the services and joys of a holy and blissful immortality had not commenced.

The history of a revolution upon which, according to the estimate of him who passed through it, his personal salvation hung, must necessarily have an exceeding interest to all who agree in the conclusions to which that revolution conducted him. But should it not also awaken the curiosity of those who, in the absence of such an agreement, have yet a strong general confidence in the entire sincerity and large capabilities of discernment of Dr. Chalmers? They not only do not receive, but they have a strong inward repugnance to those peculiar doctrines, and those peculiar ways—by word and deed—of illustrating and enforcing them, which prevail with a certain class of religionists, whom they are in the habit of regarding generally with a sentiment bordering on contemptuous disgust. They think, that for that sentiment they have good and valid warrant. They believe of those whom they thus pity or despise, that they are very narrow-minded—that they neither see themselves as they are seen by others, nor look with a broad and charitable intelligence along the wide waving lines of human belief. It might serve to shake such out of that confidence wherein they have intrenched themselves, could they be made to see it of another—and that other such a one as they admit Dr. Chalmers to have been—that the very thoughts which they now are thinking, he too once thought—and that all that searching discernment which they credit themselves with, he too once exercised upon the disciples of evangelism—and that the full force of all that recoil and antipathy which they are feeling, he too

once felt. I have not inserted in this volume those earlier sermons in which fullest and most vehement utterance is given to the strong dislike which he at that time cherished to the doctrines of free grace, and to the style of character and conduct exhibited by many of the most zealous of their advocates. Enough, however, is presented, to enable the intelligent reader to look upon the earlier period of his ministry, both in its positive and negative aspects, in what was present and required to be removed—in what was absent and required to be imparted—in the prejudices which behoved to be overborne, as well as in the faith which behoved to be implanted. The contrast between the first seven and the succeeding sermons in this volume, will help such a reader to trace in outline the distinctive characteristics of the former and latter epochs of his pulpit-history; and when the full materials for filling up that outline shall have been furnished, still more clearly will he then discern how that earlier experience of Dr. Chalmers qualified him for dealing so wisely, so faithfully and so tenderly as he ever did with those in whom he saw what he once himself had been—and helped to prepare him for becoming what, when all his theological writings shall have been given to the world, I can scarcely doubt that he will be generally acknowledged to have been—the ablest and most judicious, as well as the most eloquent expounder, within the whole range of British authorship, of the two great cardinal doctrines of our faith—the doctrine of the radical and entire depravity of our nature, and the doctrine of the sinner's free gratuitous justification before God through faith in the imputed righteousness of Christ.

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THE TEMPTATION.

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SERMON I.

[The manuscript of the following sermon bears the date of January 18 1798, two months before Dr. Chalmers' eighteenth birthday, and a year and a half before he was licensed by the Presbytery as a preacher of the gospel. It must have been written as a Divinity Hall class exercise during the last session of his regular attendance at the University of St. Andrews. Its concluding paragraphs lay bare to us those fatal misapprehensions of the great doctrine of justification by faith only, which were cherished by him during the first ten years of his ministry—against which he was afterwards all the better fitted to guard others because of his having been so long misled by them himself.]

MICAH VI. 8.

"He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"

This passage, if taken in connection with the context, would naturally direct our thoughts to the evils of hypocrisy and superstition. It would lead us to infer that the mind alone is the seat of virtue; that in our estimation of religion we are not to have respect to the works of the hand, but only to the moral disposition of the heart. Instead, however, of adverting more particularly to the occasion of the text, I propose to consider it independently, and of itself; and shall first endeavor to illustrate the particular duties enjoined in the text, and shall then consider it in its connection with the religion of Jesus.

The Lord requireth of thee to do justly—to love mercy. The promotion of happiness is the great end of all social duty. Wherefore is it that justice approves itself to our feelings of virtue? Because without its observance the peace, the happiness, the very existence of society would be endangered. Mercy, also, is the object of moral approbation; because by the relief of indigence, by the consolation of misery, it advances and promotes the happiness of

men. Both are equally incumbent, because both conduce to the same end. In the eye of civil polity *doing justly* may be all that is in duty required, but in the eye of eternal reason and virtue *loving mercy* is no less indispensable. It is the end which these virtues have a tendency to promote that confers upon them their moral obligation. This end is one and invariable; the means which lead to its attainment are diversified with the circumstances of the case. Justice and mercy include in them all the various manners of acting by which we can contribute to the happiness of mankind. Hence they resolve themselves into that great duty which consists in devoting our time and our labor to the welfare of others. Benevolence or universal charity is the source from which the observance of these duties proceeds. It is this principle of love which guides through the path of duty, and is the fountain of all our social virtues. It equally calls upon us to satisfy the demands of justice and to visit the abodes of wretchedness; to discharge with fidelity the trust reposed in us, and to exercise all our tender affections. Let us cultivate this spirit of benevolence and love, and we fulfill the duties recommended in the text; for all the commandments are briefly comprehended in this saying—Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

Let us now proceed to the last duty which the text recommends—Thou shalt walk humbly with thy God. Walking humbly with God more immediately involves in it an entire acquiescence in His authority—an unbounded resignation to His will. It is opposed to that arrogance of mind which would lead us to cavil and repine at the dispensations of His providence. But it also includes in it the whole of piety; to it may be referred all those affections of mind which should result from the relations we stand in to our Creator. It is with God that we are required to walk humbly; and if so, we must be open to every sentiment which the contemplation of His perfections is calculated to inspire—to the awe of His power, to confidence in His wisdom, and to the love of His goodness. The man of

humility strives to offer an acceptable service to the Author of his being. Does God speak? he listens to his words with an awful reverence; he reposes an unlimited trust in His veracity. Does God declare his will? with unbounded faith he receives His sovereign mandates, and submits to their influence. A sacred reverence for the authority of God keeps him in the path of His divine commandments, and leads him to watch over his conduct with trembling anxiety. But humility towards God does not consist entirely in the dread of His power, and it by no means consists in that slavish terror which enfeebles the energy of the mind, and destroys the vitals of our happiness. The Deity hath deigned to reveal Himself to us under the endearing images of our father and friend. He hath softened the sense of His greatness by giving us a view of his beneficence and love. We ought therefore to cherish sentiments of gratitude and affection, and the contemplation of the divine goodness should inspire our hearts with confidence and joy. Think not, then, that piety casts a gloom over the face of nature. Think not that sullen and dejected it retires from the world to dwell on nothing but subjects of melancholy. Think not that the sigh of sadness or the tears of penitential sorrow are its whole employments. True, the ravages of sin, the imperfections of finite nature, may cause it to hide its face for a time in all the bitterness of grief. But soon will the light of the divine countenance be restored, and that voice of heavenly consolation be heard which speaketh peace to the soul. Then piety appears arrayed in all its beauty and luster. It harmonizes with every generous feeling of our nature, and ennobles the enjoyments of life. It confers new dignity on man; and the sense of this dignity affords a new theme of gratitude and love.

Now may we be convinced of the propriety of applying the epithet "good" to humility or piety towards God. Alas, it is only in the sense of His wise providence that we can find any rational support to the soul amidst the present scenes of obscurity and confusion! Man mourns over his

afflictions; cares and anxieties distract his mind. Following after peace, earnest in the pursuit of happiness, the events of every day convince him of the fallacy of his hopes —every hour brings on new topics of lamentation and complaint. What then shall he do? Shall he sit down under the despondency of continual apprehension, destitute of all hope in futurity, and incapable of the sublime exertions of virtue? In sullen despair shall he drag out his miserable existence without a generous sentiment to elevate his mind, and without a ray of consolation to cheer the gloom of life? No; let the infinite wisdom and unbounded goodness of God be impressed on his mind; let him contemplate those provisions which the Author of nature hath made for the encouragement and comfort of His creatures; and let him fit himself by the exercises of humility and piety for the enjoyment of the blessings which these provisions insure; —then will be dispelled those clouds of sorrow and darkness which overhung his mind; the peace of his soul will be completely restored. Resting with an humble assurance on the favor of his God, he looks forward with joy to that felicity which His goodness gives him reason to expect. Amidst the storms and the tempests of life he extends his prospects to the regions of everlasting peace. Let us therefore recognize the goodness of genuine humility. It is good in the moral sense, because in the eye of reason and of virtue it naturally results from that relation which subsists between man and his Maker; and it is good also in the natural sense, because it alleviates the evils of this present life, and prepares us for the enjoyment of eternal felicity.

In the same manner we must acknowledge the goodness of benevolence. The exercises of pure and perfect benevolence would convert this vale of tears into a paradise of bliss. Under its benign influence want and its attendant evils would be banished from the earth; men would feel little of the evils, and would enjoy in perfection the blessings of life. Why has the populous city become an habitation for the beasts of the desert? Wherefore is *that* a dreary wilderness which was formerly crowned with the

blessings of plenty—where innocence and peace took up their abode, and nothing was heard but the voice of joy? We are not to say that Nature was unkind, or that she delights in the misery of her children. We have seldom to ascribe it to the ravage of the elements, or to any of those evils which are essential to our state, but to the wickedness and depravity of the human heart—to the dire effusions of passion—to the mad ambition of wealth and of power. These are the principal sources of human wretchedness; and these it is the direct tendency of benevolence to suppress. Under its happy reign all would enjoy the exquisite pleasures of loving and of being beloved—pleasures which are congenial to the heart and make up the chief part of our happiness. Though the powers of nature should conspire to rob us of our peace, yet the voice of love would invite us to gladness. Though the heavens should withhold their rain, and the earth forbear to yield its increase; or though the fair face of nature should be overcast in the gloom of night, and the blast of the storm should threaten to overwhelm us; yet supported by the kind endearments of friendship, we may continue unruffled and serene, and our minds be open to the most feeling enjoyments. On the other hand, let everything without unite to gratify our desires and increase our enjoyments; let the labor of the year be crowned with success; let the seasons join in concert for our accommodation and ease; let the sun dispense in due proportion his cheering influences; let the fury of the tempest be allayed, and all around us be clothed in mildness and beauty; unless the heart of man accords with the beneficence of nature—unless his mind is open to the warm impressions of sympathy and love—misery will still be our lot; the tale of wo will still be heard in our streets; and this world will continue the abode of wretchedness. The sufferings of Job were aggravated in the extreme. Yet the loss of his wealth, the ravages of disease, the death of his children, the dissolution of the most endearing connections in nature, were all unable to shake the patient fortitude of his mind. Still could he raise to heaven the voice of gratitude and resignation:

The Lord giveth, the Lord taketh away; blessed be His name. But when his companions and friends, instead of allaying the anguish of his grief, instead of taking upon them the part of a comforter, began to insult him with their bitter accusations, then the vigor of his mind was unequal to the arduous contest, and his soul, no longer able to support itself, was subjected to the mingled emotions of indignation and grief. Nature is kind enough, if we were only kind to one another. But often, alas! do the dark designs of malice work in our breasts; often do the silly emotions of pride and of envy obstruct the enjoyments of social intercourse. O that the principle of benevolence within us were powerful enough to eradicate these passions from our hearts. O that we were sacrificing our absurd notions of importance and dignity, our views of interest and ambition, to that great object—the good of others. O that the sufferings of our fellow-men were calling forth the tears of sympathy, and rousing to exertions of beneficence and love; then the burdens of life would bear light upon us, and our days would pass in the pure enjoyment of innocence and virtue.

Let us now proceed to consider the religion of Jesus in its connection with the spirit of the text.

Justice, mercy, and piety, are all that are or can be required of us by God. Hence if we are bound to acquiesce in the doctrines and to obey the precepts of the gospel, this acquiescence and this obedience must be the consequence of one or other of those duties which are enjoined in the text. Faith in the religion of Jesus must be the necessary effect of walking humbly with God, if the testimony of the apostles and evangelists be entitled to belief. This will appear from considering the nature of that evidence by which Christianity is supported. Those arguments for its truth which are derived from our experience of the usual conduct and behavior of men have never been refuted. And on the validity of these arguments, we are capable of forming a right, unerring judgment; since the conduct of men in all states and circumstances is the subject of daily observation. But whence are the objections of our opponents derived?

They are derived from some supposed defect in the scheme or dispensation of Christianity; from something which they imagine to be inconsistent with the nature of God, or unworthy of His perfections. But can this invalidate the force of that evidence which we know how to measure and ascertain? When reasoning on the conduct of men, we can form our conclusions with certainty and precision; but when reasoning on the conduct of God, we are involved in the clouds of ignorance and error. We are unable to scan the ways of Jehovah, to trace the operations of unerring wisdom. We cannot determine on the rectitude of the divine dispensations, since we know them not in all their relations and all their extent. It is not for us, the frail insects of a day, who are yet in the childhood of existence, who scarce have had time to look about us in the immense theater of being; it is not for us to oppose the feeble powers of our reason to the wonders of Omnipotence. When we know the mechanism of the universe, when we are acquainted with the laws by which its vast operations are conducted, when we can trace the connections which run through the various systems of being—then, and then only, are we entitled to decide on the propriety of the means which the Author of nature may adopt for the completion of His designs. Seeing then our ignorance in the ways of God, we must be cautious of making some supposed inconsistency with His attributes a ground of rejecting what is proposed as the revelation of His will. No opinion that we may form of His conduct can ever be the criterion of its truth or falsehood. But the case is different with regard to the conduct of men; here we can reason with all the confidence of truth. Shall therefore a mere assumption on the methods of the divine administration counterbalance those arguments on which alone we are capable of deciding with assurance? I leave it to the determination of sound philosophy. Thus Christianity approves itself to our understandings as being divinely inspired, and we fail in our duty to God if we believe not its doctrines nor submit to its precepts.

When inquiring into the divine will we would observe that

the doctrines of revelation are laid before us with different degrees of light and clearness. Hence we would receive them with the hesitation of partial knowledge, or with the confidence of truth. What is clearly revealed we would treasure up in our minds as of the most essential importance. What is hid in obscurity or is remote from our apprehensions we would regard with an awful reverence, but would forbear to reason on with the assurance of dogmatism. But, alas! this natural order has been inverted—and to this we are in a great measure to ascribe the corruptions of Christianity. Instead of employing their zeal in maintaining that faith and that practice which are clearly laid down in Scripture, and which it insists upon as our duty to God and as essential to our happiness, many have directed their chief attention to those subjects on which it is undecided and obscure. They have attached the highest degree of importance to those doctrines which transcend the limits of our faculties, and to these they have sacrificed all that can inform the understanding or improve the heart. Thus religion is made to consist in dark speculations and unprofitable inquiries. The beautiful simplicity of the gospel is defaced, and a dark vail of mysticism intercepts from our view the light of divine truth. The effects of heavenly instruction are lost on the world, since Christianity thus perverted from its original excellence is unsuited to the natures and capacities of reasonable beings. The corrupters of evangelical purity, in accordance with their zeal for the particular doctrines they have espoused, maintain the absolute necessity of believing in them. Thus in their systems of theological truth, they have had the audacity to heap article on article, and to crown all with this thundering assertion—that eternal misery awaits those who should dare to dissent. What a lamentable deviation from the spirit of the text! Here the rewards of heaven are attached to the exercise of our virtuous affections. And what is the line of conduct which these would lead us to adopt? They lead us to repose an unlimited confidence in the veracity of God, to examine the revelation of His will with humility and candor, and to

keep our minds open to those impressions which the perusal of its contents are fitted to produce. If, therefore, the tenets of these religionists are contained in the Scriptures of truth, it will be a dictate of piety that we acquiesce in them, since it would be an insult on the Divine Being to withhold our assent. But the faith of Christianity is praiseworthy and meritorious only because it is derived from the influence of virtuous sentiments on the mind. Hence the labors of those are grossly misapplied who inculcate the belief of certain religious truths as the method of obtaining the favor of heaven. Let us rather endeavor to inspire men with virtuous affections; let us impress upon their hearts the sentiments of humility and piety; and let us refer the revelations of the divine will to their own examination. They will there recognize the doctrines which it is incumbent on them to believe, and they will discern the sources of this incumbency. Let us tremble to think that anything but virtue can recommend us to the Almighty. True, we wander in the paths of vanity and darkness, and Christ is pointed out to us as our only refuge against the terrors of guilt; but the acknowledgment of our Saviour, that faith in Him, which is essential to our happiness, is brought about by the impulse of moral sentiment, and unless it were so we cannot see how it could insure to us the favor of heaven.

In nothing has the genius of mysticism more displayed itself than in the delineations of that faith which is a requisite to salvation. We recognize the faith of Christianity as that which is derived from the force of reason, and the energy of virtuous sentiment. But the misguided votaries of superstition and fanaticism have involved this subject in darkness. They talk of faith, and their notions of this faith are contradictory and absurd; a faith which consists not in the assent of the understanding, but in some strange undefinable affection of the mind—a faith not derived from the calm exercises of the inquiring faculty, or from the sober suggestions of humility and piety; but a faith which precedes all examination, and is said to be the primary source of all that is good and excellent in the human character. I

ask the man of common sense, if he can form to himself any idea of this faith—the favorite topic of declamation with these famed religionists. But they love to soar aloft; their ears are soothed, their imaginations are dazzled with those high-sounding words, those notable phrases which they think can explain all the mysteries of theological science. We consider the faith of Christianity to be the humble assurance of an honest mind which grounds its confidence on the consciousness of its own sincerity, on the view of the divine goodness, and on the contemplation of those provisions which the Author of nature hath made for the encouragement of erring mortals. But the perverters of the truth as it is in Jesus have determined that to be the saving faith which none but the presumptuous can entertain; not that faith which worketh by love, which purifieth the heart, and which overcometh the world, but that faith which, according with the pride of their minds, elevates them in their own esteem as the peculiar favorites of heaven. This faith (horrible to relate) they carry about with them as an amulet against the reproaches of a guilty conscience, and thus do they stifle the feelings of nature, and check the sentiments of virtue. Sanctioned by this faith they may oppress the poor, the fatherless, and the widow—they may betray the interests of an unsuspecting friend, while they lay claim to the friendship of heaven. Sanctioned by this faith they may indulge in every excess of sensual voluptuousness, while they have confidence in their hearts towards God, who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity. Sanctioned by this faith they may meditate on schemes of robbery and murder, while they exclaim with exultation—Lo, the Spirit of Jesus is in us.—O my soul come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly mine honor be not thou united. Instruments of cruelty are in their habitations; they bathe their hands in the blood of innocence; they lurk in the dark haunts of villainy; and, good God! they sit secure amidst such enormities, and rejoice in their presumption as the mark of intimacy with the Spirit, and of growth in grace.

O Christianity whither hast thou fled? where hast thou

taken up thine abode? We sought for thy instructions, but counsels were darkened by words without knowledge. We sought for thy beauties, and the picture of horrid deformity was exhibited to our view. We sought for thy consolations, and our souls were appalled with the sounds of horror and despair. Surely thou art despoiled of thy graces and thy ornaments. Surely thou hast resigned the lovely honors of thy head. We took thee for the messenger of glad tidings, for the publisher of love, peace, and joy; but we have seen thee clothed with terror, and striking with dismay thy slavish worshipers. We took thee for the support and encouragement of virtue, but, alas! we have seen all that accords with the feelings of our minds despised and overlooked, and we have seen thy blessings and thy rewards attached to the pride of censorious dogmatism, to the confidence of presumption, and to the unmeaning effusions of false zeal. The soul formed to sentiments of generosity sickens at the prospect, and must either rise superior to the prejudices of the times, or (dreadful alternative) shelter itself in infidel repose.

Let us therefore pray the Father of Spirits that He would dispel those clouds of ignorance and error which overwhelm the nations; that He would enable them to see the religion of Jesus in its native purity; that He would enable them to see it through that vail of mysticism with which the pernicious superstition of men hath invested it; that He would enable them to see it as the offspring of reason and virtue. Then they will leave their dark and intricate speculations. They will learn to relish the simplicity of the gospel—that affecting strain of sentiment which pervades it—that warm spirit of benevolence which it breathes—those sublime precepts of morality which it inculcates. They will learn to admire and to imitate the rational and elevated piety, the ardent charity, the pure and exalted virtue of Jesus and His apostles.

SERMON II.

[No date is attached either to this sermon or to that which immediately succeeds it. The state however of the manuscripts, and the style of the penmanship (which from the marked changes it undergoes at different successive stages is almost of itself a sufficient guide), as well as certain internal evidences, carry with them the conviction that these two sermons were among the very earliest of Dr. Chalmers' pulpit preparations.]

JAMES IV. 11.

"Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge."

It is not calumny to speak evil of another when the evidence of his guilt is undeniable, and when it is necessary to defend the young against the dangers of his example. It is not calumny to deal out to vice its infamy and its correction —to hold it up to the terror and the execration of the neighborhood—to lay open the secret recesses of hypocrisy—or to unmask the dissimulations of injustice. If this is to be denounced as calumny, vice will reign triumphant in the world, public opinion will lose its energy, deceit and profligacy will have nothing to fear from the resentment of indignation; they will lift an unabashed countenance in the face of day, and lord it in insolent security. Some are for carrying the victory of candor to a disgusting and an affected extremity. I hate that candor that would control the risings of a generous indignation, where guilt is open and unquestionable; that candor which can ape Christian charity, while it looks with patience on the oppressions or the triumphs of injustice; that candor which can maintain a regulated composure of aspect, though it sees virtue in disgrace, and vice enthroned in the honors of preferment; that well-bred accommodation which can smile equally on all, and sit in contentment amid the general decay of worth and principle.

Such a man as this passes for a lover of peace, an excellent member of society, who never thinks of disturbing our repose by his furious and turbulent invectives—who never obtrudes his own offensive peculiarities of temper or of opinion—who never acts the firebrand of mischief, but suffers us to proceed in quietness. But to complete the picture, this good-natured accommodating man has sometimes an interest to mind, which requires him on the one hand to yield to the reigning corruptions, and on the other to depress the credit and pretensions of an obnoxious individual. Let us observe the plan which this enemy to evil-speaking and to everything that is violent and intemperate, let us observe the plan he pursues to time it to his purposes. This pattern of Christian temper will find it necessary to throw out his insinuations, but then he will do it with decency; he will betray no rash or unguarded violence; he will trample on no established ceremonial; he will speak kindness and smile complacency on the victim of his resentment; he will honor him with the attentions of politeness, and share with him the hour of mirth and conviviality. Some feelings of malignity may rankle in his bosom—but then he does not offend by the ostentation of them. Some secret mischief may be brooding in his intentions, but then he does not alarm by his menaces. Whatever is calculated to agitate or terrify he kindly withdraws from his observation, and delights him by his manners and civility, though he find it convenient at times to make free with his character—propagate in secret the tale of infamy—set all his low rabble of emissaries on the work of misrepresentation—and awaken the contempt or hostility of a deluded public. Yet such is the false estimate of calumny, which pervades these scenes of interest and competition—where the artifices of mere policy have perverted every sentiment of justice, and crushed every genuine and unaffected feeling of the heart—where the indignation of a mind at glaring and acknowledged guilt, is ascribed to the working of a foul-mouthed malignity—while not a man appears to lift the voice of remonstrance against the character of him who, under the semblances of a smooth

exterior, will spread his deceitful insinuations and work the ruin and disgrace of the upright.

The guilt of calumny lies in the three following circumstances: First, in the imperfection of that evidence upon which the calumny is founded. Second, in the injury it does to the unhappy victim. Third, in its prejudicial effects upon the general interests of virtue.

First, then, as to the imperfection of the evidence. There are some actions which carry villainy on the very face of them, and which can meet with no quarter even from the meekness of charity—such as the foulness of a murder, the infamy of artful and deliberate seduction, the desertion of a parent who is left by the ingratitude of his children to the solitude and helplessness of age, the brazen effrontery of falsehood, which can rejoice in the success of its artifices, and laugh at the unsuspecting simplicity of the virtuous. There are other actions where the merit is ambiguous or uncertain, and this is the favorite field for the exercise of calumny. When a man relieves a beggar in the street, it may be the impulse of generous emotion, but calumny will tell you it is the vanity of ostentation. When a man stops short in the career of prosperity, and resigns himself to the mercy of his creditors, it may be the cruelty of misfortune, but calumny will tell you of his concealed treasure, of his fictitious entries, of his sly and artful evasions. When a man gives himself to mirth and to company, it may be the innocent act of a convivial and benevolent heart, but calumny will tell you of his midnight excess, of his habitual licentiousness, of his extravagant dissipation. When we hear in the house the music of family devotion, it may be in the spirit of old and respectable piety, but calumny will tell you of the rigor of puritanical solemnity, or the disgusting mask of the hypocrite. When a man is prosecuting the claims of justice, it may be with all the purity of upright and honorable intentions, but calumny will tell you that it is the gripe of avarice or the insolence of oppression. Where candor would hesitate, calumny assumes the tone of authority. Where candor would demand proof and investigation, calumny gives

her confident decisions. Where candor is for waiting in silence and suspending her judgments, calumny draws her precipitate inference, and indulges in all the temerity of invective. Where candor is for checking the progress of a malicious report as unwarranted by evidence, calumny renews all her efforts and gives fresh activity to the circulation. Where the merit of an action is disguised by the uncertainty of its evidence, or the ambiguity of its complexion, candor always gives her decision on the side of innocence and of mercy, but it is the delight of calumny to give it a dark, malignant coloring, and to send it round to infamy and reprobation. You must all have observed the successive additions that are given to the tale of scandal as it circulates through a neighborhood. They sometimes proceed from malice, but oftener I believe from an idle, gossiping propensity—from the love of being listened to with astonishment—from the want, not of heart and tenderness, but from the want of cautious and reflecting prudence—from the hurry and inadvertence of the moment when acquaintances meet, and the happy hour is given to thoughtlessness and to gayety. Let it be remembered, however, that thoughtlessness is criminal when it is employed in giving currency to falsehood—when it tends to mislead society on a matter of such sacred importance as the character of one of its members—when it consigns the upright to shame and to infamy—when it sets up the hasty cry of execration in cases where the evidence is uncertain, and candor tells us to forbear.

The action which calumny condemns in its unhappy victim should be attributed to him with hesitation, because in each step of its progress the story is apt to gain an addition from the mistakes of the inconsiderate, or from the fabrications of a deliberate malignity. The motive from which the action is said to have originated should if possible be assigned with still greater hesitation, because it lies in the heart—it hides in a vail of impenetrable secrecy—it is unseen by every eye save Omniscience—it is written on no record save the book of judgment—it remains untold till

that awful day when the universe shall hear it—when the worlds shall assemble round our Redeemer's throne, and listen to the revelations of justice. There is no subject that demands more time and more investigation than a question of character; yet how seldom do men think of suspending their judgment—how rash and how presumptuous in their decisions—how prone to malicious interpretation in cases that are ambiguous—how fond of indulging in the eloquence of invective, and how elated with the malignant pleasure of throwing ridicule on the absent, and sending the tale of detraction through the country. It is a peculiarity which you must all have observed, that where the case is positively uncertain the general propensity is to give it on the side of condemnation—to attach to it the most malignant construction of which it is susceptible—to dress it up in the colors of infamy, and to give all the confidence of truth to what are at best but the fancies of a suspicious temper. It is in this way that the world is ever doing the grossest injustice to individuals—that the innocent are at times repelled by the scowl of suspicion—that virtue labors under the contempt of a deluded people—that the man whose heart rises in all the warmth of affection can often meet with no eye of kindness to cheer him, no friend to enlighten the solitude of his bosom. There is a worth that escapes the eye of an unthinking world—a deed of exalted charity that they never hear of—a tear of secret affection that shrinks from notice, and courts the indulgence of retirement—a life spent in unseen acts of beneficence which are only recorded in the book of heaven. To all this the world is a stranger; it sees not the heart; it forms its estimate upon the appearances of a delusive exterior; it overlooks the intention, and in the temerity of its heedless decisions, will lacerate and deform the best of characters. The world is the slave of manners. It will love you if you can put on the smiling countenance of affection; it will give you credit for a social and benevolent heart if you can lead your company to mirth, and maintain the frank and open air of an undissembled honesty. But how many of the first of our race are incapable of man-

ner—are oppressed by the embarrassments of modesty—shrink from the observation of the world—give themselves up to the silence of an awkward timidity, and under the disguise of a cold and unpromising exterior, are received in every company with the frowns of antipathy and disgust. The character of such a man is not known beyond the little circle of his friends and of his family—of those poor whom his bounty sustains, and those cottages which his charity enlightens. He lives to obscurity, and dies in forgetfulness; no epitaph to blazon his virtues—no pomp of heraldry to embalm his remembrance. His death is never heard of among the tidings of the market-place. His only memorial is the memorial of simple and unnoticed virtue—the tears of his children, and the regret of his humble neighborhood.

Let the sense of our ignorance restrain a disposition to rash and unthinking calumny. The action is often transformed by the errors of inadvertence, or the artifices of a willful misrepresentation. The motive is as often disguised from the secret and unknown circumstances on which it is founded. To tell the motive we must fathom the mysteries of the heart which sits in an invisible retirement, and eludes the penetration of mortals. In deciding upon a partial view of circumstances we run the risk of a total misconception; the addition of a single fact will often suffice to reverse the judgment we had formed, and to convince us that that action is laudable which, in the temerity of our unthinking ignorance, we had before pronounced to be criminal. When a man shuts himself up in retirement, and abstains from the expenses of hospitality, calumny will immediately denounce him as an avaricious and unsociable character; but calumny should stop its mouth when it hears that all the savings of this frugality are given to support the infirmity of an aged parent. When a man gives up the laborious exercises of his employment, and becomes an humble dependent on the charity of others, calumny will instantly ascribe it to the love of ease and of indolence; but calumny should soften its decision when it hears that his strength is wasted by the secret and unnoticed visitations of disease. When a man

keeps back from the celebration of a sacrament, calumny will talk of his impious contempt for ordinances; but calumny should assume a milder tone when it hears that under the death of a beloved child he has withdrawn himself to the grief of solitude, and labors under all the agitations of a dark and disordered melancholy. When a man turns away from solicitations of charity, calumny may say that it is the gripe of avarice; but calumny should reserve its sentence when it hears that he is on the eve of falling in the tide of bankruptcy, and that he will surrender the wreck of his fortune to satisfy the higher claims of justice and of his creditors. Ignorant then as we are of motives and of circumstances, we should learn to be cautious and hesitating on a question of character, to check every slanderous and malignant propensity, to feel how much is due to truth and justice, and if not able to hush, to abhor the tale of infamy. Let us at least withdraw our countenance from its propagation, and blush to prostitute our testimony to the unsupported assertions of a petty and contemptible scandal. What can be said of those who sit in close convention and plot the massacre of a virtuous reputation, who delight to survey human nature in its most odious and degrading attitudes, who look with an exulting eye over the deformed exhibitions of vice and folly, who seem to feast on the melancholy picture of another's guilt, whose ears are only opened to the tale of detraction, and whose mouths are only opened to traduce and to vilify? If any thing can add to our indignation it is the midnight and impenetrable secrecy under which these proceedings are conducted, the artful insinuations they practice against him whom they have singled out as the victim of their calumny, the cowardly advantages that they take of his absence, the smile of affection and civility which they can force into their countenance, while their heart is brooding over the most dark and malignant purposes. Let it be remembered that we may be guilty of calumny without speaking evil. This is the most odious and disgusting of all calumny; not an open and intrepid assertion, but a cowardly insinuation, a hint, a sneaking

indirect artifice, an expression of regret, a distant allusion to set malignity to the work of conjecture, and to awaken the suspicion of your company. This is calumny in fact, though not in form. It is sure to be accompanied with all the mischief of calumny. It gives sufficient foundation for a tale to circulate through the country, an impression to run through all the workshops of scandal in the neighborhood, a groundwork from which a diseased fancy will conjure up its images of guilt and of profligacy, a report which, however trifling in its commencement, will rise through successive additions to a ruinous and malignant falsehood. Let the tale of detraction be listened to with distrust. Much is to be deducted; all the errors that gradually creep into representations from the inaccuracy of the careless, or the knowing and deliberate fabrications of the malignant; all the errors that proceed from our ignorance of other circumstances by which the merit of the action may be most essentially affected; and above all, the errors that proceed from our ignorance of the heart, and of its secret and unfathomable mysteries. Such is the openness of the public ear to the tale of detraction that calumny is too often successful even in her most base and unprincipled efforts. No virtue however exalted can escape her foul and pestilential attacks; she can array the loveliness of innocence in the garb of infamy, and turn the scowl of every eye against the most pure and upright and gentle of characters. This is an awful combination of wickedness—the combination of malignity and falsehood—a combination against all that is sacred in truth, and all that is endearing in domestic tranquillity—a combination against the happiness of families and the peace of society—a combination against the reign of virtue in the world, and against the best comforts which cheer and alleviate the lot of humanity.

This leads me to the second head of discourse—The sufferings which calumny inflicts upon its unhappy victim. All are born to feel the salutary control of public opinion. It is a most powerful engine for the preservation of virtue. Men will compass sea and land to gain the applause of their

countrymen. Enough for them the reward of honorable distinction. It is the voice of glory to which they listen, and the voice is omnipotent. It is to the inspiration of her voice that we owe all that is exalted in patriotism, in war, in philosophy. For her the statesman will bravely maintain his integrity, and to be the man of the people he will renounce the favor of princes and the gains of a petty ambition. For her the commander will meet death with a fearless countenance, and eye with intrepid composure the scenes of blood and of violence into which he is entering. For her the student sits by the light of the midnight taper, and in the animating anticipations of future eminence can renounce without a sigh the charms of indolence and of gayety. Even to the home-bred walks of life and of business the voice of glory is not a stranger. You will meet with ambition in the lowest cottages of the country. Its aim is humble, but it is only the obscurity of circumstances which restrains it. In kind and in character it is the same with that ambition which figures to the eye of the world on a more exalted theater—the same unwearied and persevering constancy in the prosecution of its object, the same jealousy of reputation, the same insatiable appetite for applause, the same triumphant elevation in the moment of success, the same misery under the sufferings of disappointment. To see man it is not necessary to traverse all countries, or to witness all the varieties of religion and government. It is not necessary to step beyond the limits of the little town or hamlet in which Providence has placed you. You will meet with all the elements of human character in the rustic abodes of simplicity and nature. You will there meet with that ambition which if placed in a higher sphere would scatter disorder among the nations, and strive to control the destiny of empiries. You will meet with that cruelty which, if at the head of a victorious army, would carry outrage and violence into the habitations of the innocent, and kindle in malignant joy at the barbarity of war. You will meet with that avarice which, if elevated to the management of a province, would fill the country with tax-

ation, and flourish on the distress and poverty of millions. You will also meet with all the more virtuous and honorable propensities of the mind, with that goodness which in a higher sphere would have risen to an exalted patriotism, with that contempt for the disgraceful which would have lifted its voice against the measures of a corrupt and degenerate policy, with that firmness which would have withstood the frown of power and the fury of popular commotion.—But to return from this digression. What in the highest stations of society is called respect for the public opinion, is in humbler and more contracted spheres called respect for the opinion of the neighborhood. Respect for the opinion of others is a constant but irresistible principle in the human constitution. To disdain it is the boast of an affected independence; it is an effusion of vanity; it is an idle pretense to a stoical and romantic elevation of character. Not a man, I will venture to say, but feels his dependence on public opinion. Even though armed with the consciousness of integrity he feels himself compelled to pay homage at its shrine. You will seldom, I may say you will never, meet with an example of independence solitary and unsupported—an independence founded exclusively upon the consciousness of virtue and the silent reflections of a desolate and unbefriended bosom—an independence that can brave the scowl of every eye and the desertion of all its acquaintances. A man of firm and independent energy will at times appear who can stand before the eye of the world in the manly and intrepid attitude of defiance; but I contend that this energy is supported from without. It is supported by the testimony of some selected person on whose esteem he places his pride and his enjoyment; it is supported by the anticipation of that day when the eyes of the public shall be opened and their curses converted into admiration and gratitude; it is supported, in fact, by that very respect for public opinion which he now professes to disown, and of which his proceedings would speak him to be totally divested. But take from him the last remnants of his friends, take from him his last refuge against the

malignity of an unthinking world, give him no eye of welcome to which he may retire from the persecutions of injustice, let every countenance bear hatred against him, and let there be no voice of kindness to alleviate the gloom of his solitude, he will fall even though encompassed with the armor of virtue; the accumulated weight of infamy will be unsupportable to him; he will pine away in the anguish of desertion, and welcome the silence of the grave as his only retreat from the horrors of this world's cruelty. Let the severity of the world's opinion then be reserved as the punishment and the correction of vice. But calumny directs this severity against the virtuous. Calumny dooms the upright to contempt and infamy. Calumny tramples on all distinctions of character, and makes any man a victim to her malicious artifices. To take away a good name is to take away the dearest privilege of integrity. It is to take away the last consolation of the unfortunate. It is to take away that generous pride which glows even in the poor man's bosom, and supports the vigor of his purposes. Ask him who has gone through life, and felt its vicissitudes, who has outlived the wreck of his circumstances, and is forced in the evening of his days to descend to the humble tenement of poverty—he will tell you that he has not lost all while his character remains to him—that he still inherits the best gift which providence can bestow—the sympathy of an affectionate neighborhood. Dreary is the winter of his age, but it has the homage of a sincere esteem to soothe and to enlighten it. Sad is the fall of his family; but why should they feel themselves degraded?—none can impeach their honesty or attach dishonor to their name. To the eye of sentiment, a man like this appears more respectable than even in his better days of opulence and comfort. We venerate the gray hairs of the unfortunate—of him who bears up with cheerfulness against the hardships which heaven has inflicted—of him who retires in silence and gives the remainder of his years to peaceful obscurity, who spends the evening of his life in humble and uncomplaining patience, whom experience has taught wisdom, and wisdom

has taught the exalted lessons of contentment and piety. To pursue the unfortunate with calumny is to give the last aggravation to their sufferings. It is to make them poor indeed. It is to add to the pangs of that heart that is already wrung with the cruelty of misfortune. It is removing the only support that is left to them in this dark and uncertain world. It is to bestrew with thorns that weary journey which it has pleased heaven to make otherwise so painful. There are some minds of peculiar sensibility which cannot withstand the scowl of prejudice and disdain, to whom dislike is painful, and whose every joy withers away at the glance of coldness. How severe to such is the rude touch of calumny! How cruel to withdraw the smiles of affection from him whose every purpose is conceived in the spirit of benevolence, to sting by coarse imputations the delicacy of his bosom, to distress by an unkind look that heart which breathes all the soul of goodness and honesty. To a man of kind intentions the frown of hatred is insupportable. He knows that he does not deserve it, and he feels its injustice. Heaven can witness his integrity, and it is hard that the world should be to him a wilderness, or that the tranquillity of his life should be outraged by the effects of a malignant calumny. I do not say that the world in its unkind treatment of virtue is actuated by a spirit of wanton cruelty: I impute it to rash and unthinking ignorance; I regard it as a dupe to the malicious artifices of those who have an interest in misleading the public opinion, and in tarnishing the honors of an upright and respectable character. When the world is undeceived, it is ever ready to do justice to those whom it has injured by its opinion—to sympathize with them in their unmerited sufferings—to assert the cause of disgraced and persecuted virtue, and to raise the voice of a generous indignation against the arts of an unfeeling calumny. But how often does it happen that the world is never undeceived; that prejudice has shut its ears against the representations of the candid; that the remonstrances of the injured are never listened to; that they are given to the wind; that they are never heard till

he reach the grave's peaceful retreat, and unbosom his sorrows to that heavenly witness who has seen all his griefs and all his errors? The public mind of every free country is generous, and ready to award to the deserving its tribute of admiration and gratitude. But though the public mind be generous, it is the slave of prejudice and misconception. It takes its tone from the reigning system of policy and of opinion. In the hands of the artful, it can be fashioned into an instrument of injustice, persecution, and revenge. The history of our own country furnishes innumerable examples of men consigned to infamy and to desertion for having uttered a sentiment offensive to the reigning politics of the day—for having given way to the warmth of an honest enthusiasm—for rising in all the ardor of an exalted patriotism—for lifting up their voice and their testimony against the measures of a corrupt and domineering influence. I do not say that when the public combine against the fame or the interest of such a character they do it in the spirit of malignity. They are deceived. They are the dupes of imposture. A false alarm is made to occupy the public ear. The ardor of patriotism is stigmatized as the turbulence of rebellion. We at times hear of men lying under a cloud. Trace the ignominy of these men to its foundation, and you will often find that it originates in a political artifice—in a cry set up by an interested combination of enemies—in the unprincipled hostility of the powerful against an obnoxious individual—in the virulent and rancorous malignity of a domineering party. Examples of this kind are not confined to the great theater of political contention. You will meet with it in every petty district of the country—in our towns where ancient integrity is disgraced, and a putrid electioneering morality deals calumny against the virtuous; in our corporations where monopoly reigns triumphant, and envy and interest combine to crush the independence of an aspiring character; and in all those numerous departments of life and of business where the eagerness of competition stirs up every wicked passion of the heart, and throws it loose from the restraints of principle.

The mischief of calumny is not confined to the object against which it is directed. It invades the peace of his family; its cruelty descends to the youngest of his children who can blush at a father's disgrace, or whose little bosom can fire indignant at the aspersion of a father's integrity. A parent's reputation is a sacred inheritance. It reflects luster on all his connections. His children lift their heads in triumph amid the ills of poverty and misfortune. They carry him to the grave, but the remembrance of his example remains with them—it proves the guardian of their integrity; corruption in vain offers her allurements, there is a principle within them that proves at once their pride and their protection—it is the image of that departed father whom they study to emulate and to admire.

SERMON III.

JOHN XIV. 1.

"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me."

It is remarkable that all the images employed to represent human life are significant of weakness, instability, and suffering—a pilgrimage, a dark and toilsome journey, a wilderness of tears, a scene of vanity, a tale of which the remembrance vanishes, a flower which every blast of heaven can wither into decay. From the helplessness of infancy to the decrepitude of age the life of man is an endless scene of care and of anxiety—at one time agitated by the sufferings of a disappointed ambition, at another laboring under the infirmity of disease, at another depressed by the hardships of society, at another humbled under the frown of pride and insolence, at another afflicted by the awful desolations which death makes among friends and among families. The grave is said to be a refuge from the pains and sufferings of mortality; but without the light of the gospel how cold and how dreary are its consolations—what a dread uncertainty in the region which lies beyond it! The body is laid in the churchyard; but where is the departed spirit? The bones are mingling with the dust of the ground; but can the life and sensibility of the mind be extinguished? The flesh is a prey to worms; but will you say that intelligence can die, or that the soul of man can wither into nothing? Good heavens! is there some distant land to which the ghosts of our fathers repair? Do they lift the voice of joy, or weep in gloomy remembrance over the days that are past? Does felicity reign in the abode of spirits, or do they mourn that immortality which condemns them to never-ending years of pain and of solitude? Is the con-

tinuation of life on the other side of the grave a continuation of that wretchedness which distresses the present existence of mortals? These are momentous questions; but who is there to satisfy our anxiety? No visitation of light or knowledge from the tomb—no midnight whisper of departed friend to tell us the secret of our path; all is doubt and apprehension and impenetrable silence. Our hearts are troubled within us, and seek for a comforter—and a Comforter hath come; the day-spring from on high hath visited us; the secrets of futurity have been laid open; a celestial splendor now sits on the habitations of darkness; a great deliverer hath appeared, who is the healing of the nations, and the salvation of all the ends of the earth. He comes with tidings of comfort: "In my Father's house are many mansions. Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me."

In the prosecution of the following discourse I shall attempt to prove that there is no trouble to which the heart of man is exposed that a belief in the doctrines of the gospel is not calculated to purify or to alleviate. But in preaching the consolations of religion there is one caution that cannot be too frequently impressed upon the minds of Christians. These consolations can only be addressed to the sincere—to him who can appeal for the honesty of his principles to something more substantial than the words of holiness that drop from his tongue, or to the tears of penitential sorrow that flow from his eyes—to him who can appeal to the purity of his life, to the integrity of his bargains, to his deeds of active and disinterested beneficence, to the fair and open generosity of his proceedings, to that unspotted innocence of character which no breath of suspicion can defile, no calumny can impeach. It is only to a character like this that we can address the consolations of the gospel, and these consolations are the most exalted privilege of humanity. They are the great remedy against its sufferings. They give triumph and elevation to the wretched, strength to the infirm, and comfort to the bed of agony and disease. This is a world of tears; but the gospel tells us that he who

soweth in tears shall reap in joy. It points out to us the peace of a blessed eternity, and supports the spirit of the afflicted by the triumphant anticipation of better days. Many are the evils which darken and distress the pilgrimage of the virtuous. But it is a pilgrimage which leads them to heaven, to those mansions of felicity where they shall rest from their labors, and all their sorrows be forgotten. The consolations of the gospel sustain the heart of the unfortunate ; they enlighten the last days of the old man who mourns in all the helplessness of age ; they tell him that the eye of his Redeemer is upon him, and that He will soon translate him to an inheritance of unfading joy. The gospel is a dispensation of comfort. It is the good man's anchor. It bids him rejoice even in the gloomiest hours of affliction. It chases despair from his bosom, and though surrounded with all the dreary vicissitudes of this world, he can rise to the throne of mercy in songs of praise and of gratitude. Such are the triumphs of our Redeemer's love —such the debt of gratitude that man owes to his Saviour —to Him who has opened the path to immortality, and given the inheritance of angels to the frail children of guilt and disobedience—to Him who has cheered the awful desolation of the grave, and revealed to us the triumphs of that eternal day which lies beyond it—to Him who came down to earth with the tidings of salvation, and taught His disciples to believe in the resurrection of the upright. Our Saviour felt the sufferings of humanity, and He therefore knew what consolations to apply. He felt the vanity of this world's pleasures, and He secures to us a treasure in heaven. He felt the cruelty of this world's hatred, and He has propitiated for us the friendship of that mighty and unseen Being whose eye is continually upon us, and whose benevolence will never desert us. He felt the painful severity of this world's injustice, and He has revealed to us a day of triumph and of deliverance, when He will come to exalt the upright, and to vindicate the wrongs of suffering innocence.

When our Saviour addressed His disciples in the words

of the text, their prospects were dreary and disconsolate. They saw enemies multiply on every side—the storm of persecution gathering; they saw the bigotry of a deluded people in arms to oppose them; they saw their numbers weakened every hour by the desertion of the people; they saw themselves withering rapidly away into a feeble and unprotected remnant; they saw the rulers of the country in fury against them, and brooding over their awful purposes of vengeance. Such were the last days of the meek and patient Jesus—deserted by all but a chosen few who still persevered in the fidelity of their attachment, and rallied round to support Him amid the storm of persecuting violence. Yes! the disciples of our Saviour have left us a noble example of friendship and independence. Theirs was the pure and generous intrepidity of the upright. It was the sacred elevation of principle. It was the manly and commanding attitude of virtue. It was what I would call the sublime of human character; the serenity of conscious rectitude; a mind enthroned on the firm and immovable basis of integrity, and that can maintain its tranquillity while tempests rage, and the blackness of despair gathers around it. What an interesting picture!—our Saviour surrounded with the little band of disciples that still remained to Him among the wreck of His adherents, sustaining the fortitude of their spirits in the hour of terror. O religion! how sublime thy triumphs—how glorious thy victories! What a sacred independence dost thou inspire! What a noble superiority over the passions and weaknesses of mortality! What intrepidity in the day of trial and of danger! What calm and inward elevation even amid the terrors of martyrdom! We do not now live under these terrors; but there is no generation in the history of man that is exempted from affliction. There is a sorrow in the heart of man which nothing but religion can alleviate; a trouble that can find no refuge but in the consolations of piety; a disquietude that can only rest in the hope of heaven; a darkness which can find no relief but in the faith of the gospel and in the light of our Redeemer's countenance.

Let me confine myself to a few of the more striking examples from the catalogue of human afflictions. There is the infirmity of disease—a sickness which all the administration of earthly medicine cannot alleviate; a disorder that bears down upon its unhappy victim, and carries him through years of pain and of languishing to the grave of silence. There are some into whose gloomy chambers the light of day never enters; who moan out a dreary existence in the agony of distress; on whom the hand of Providence lies heavy, and whom disease in the severity of her visitations has numbered among the children of the wretched. What an aggravation to the miseries of such a state when it is embittered by the hardships of poverty; when the man of sickness can meet with no cordial to sustain him, and no attendance to administer to his necessities; when he has nothing to trust to but the reluctant charity of a neighbor whom decency has compelled to come forward with the offering of his services; when he lies stretched on a bed of restlessness with no child to weep over him—no friend to support him in the last hours of his pilgrimage—surely you will say such a man is born to an inheritance of melancholy and despair. But there is no melancholy which the religion of Jesus cannot enlighten: no despair which His consolatory voice cannot revive into confidence and joy. Christianity is ever present to soothe the agonies of the wretched; and in the last struggles of the dying man you may see the picture of its triumph. He sees death approach him with an untroubled heart. He believes in God, and he believes in Jesus His messenger. The grave is to him a refuge from suffering, and the passport to a triumphant immortality. To him the silence of the tomb is welcome. He lies down in quietness, but he will again awaken to the light of an everlasting day.

Another example of trouble and distress in the history of man is the treachery and injustice of neighbors. In preaching the consolations of religion it is a most unprofitable display of eloquence to dwell upon scenes of romantic and imaginary distress. Such pictures as those are the mere

amusements of a poetical fancy, and can serve no substantial purpose of comfort or instruction. If we wish religion to be useful, we must dwell on its application to actual and everyday occurrences. We must descend to all the realities of human life. We must accompany our hearers into their houses, their families, and their business. We must make them feel that religion is something more than the dream of fanaticism, or the idle abstraction of a visionary. We must make them feel its weight and its importance, and shrink from no familiarity however unwarranted by the example of our great patterns and directors in pulpit eloquence, or however offensive to the pride of a morbid and fastidious delicacy. Any other views of religion are vain and unprofitable. They only serve to disguise the human character, and to throw a false and delusive coloring over the walks of life. They resemble those works of fiction which may give delight and entertainment to the fancy, or amuse the reader by the splendors of an ornamental eloquence, while they leave no lesson behind them, and can be transferred to no purpose of substantial improvement. It is under these impressions that I bring forward the injustice of neighbors as standing high in the catalogue of human afflictions. We have all felt it to be of real and frequent occurrence, and it is certainly one of the most painful feelings to which you can expose a mind of pure and delicate integrity. I know nothing more calculated to provoke the indignation of an honest mind than to see the simplicity of an upright character surrounded by the low arts of knavery and imposition—trampled upon by the villainy of those whom gratitude ought to have secured to his interest—laughed at and insulted because he has too little suspicion to guard against the tricks of a sneaking duplicity, and too much generosity to distrust that man who comes to him under the disguise of smooth words and an open countenance. The loss which the injured man sustains from the injustice of his neighbor forms but a small part of his vexation. When a loss is the pure effect of accident or misfortune, it may not deprive us of a moment's

sleep, or cost us a moment's uneasiness. But when the same or an inferior loss is the effect of injustice, it comes home to the feelings with a severity which to some minds is most painfully tormenting. The loss is of little importance; but who can bear to have the generosity of an open and unsuspecting confidence insulted—who can bear to be surrounded with falsehood, artifice, and intrigue—who can bear that most grievous of all disappointments, the treachery of one who has practiced on our simplicity, and on whose integrity we placed a fond and implicit reliance—who can bear to be placed in a theater where malignity and injustice are in arms against us, where we can meet with no affection to enlighten the solitude of our bosom, no friendship in which to repose the defense of our reputation and interest? To a man whose heart rises in all the warmth of affectionate sincerity the treachery of violated friendship is insupportable. He feels himself placed in a wilderness where all is dark, and cheerless, and solitary. He resigns himself to all the horrors of a disordered melancholy, and his spirit sinks within him under the reflection of this world's injustice. But let not his heart be troubled, he has a friend in heaven. The Eternal Son of God will never desert him. The angels of mercy smile upon his footsteps, and hail his approach to their peaceful mansions. There charity never ends. There he will celebrate in songs of triumph the joys of truth and of righteousness. He will inherit the affection of the good, and join in those eternal prayers which rise to the throne of mercy from one blessed and united family.

Another example of trouble and distress in the history of man is that anxiety which every parent must feel under the embarrassment of a numerous and unprovided offspring. He has much to care for. This is a world of vice, and disease, and misfortune. The death of a child may bring affliction, but what is worse, the corruption of a child may bring infamy and disgrace upon his family. The love of parents never leaves their children. From the cry of feeble infancy to the strength and the independence of manhood,

it follows after them, and shares in all their joys and in all their anxieties. They go abroad into the world, and the hearts of their parents go abroad along with them. The warmth of a mother's affection can never desert them: she hears the howling of the midnight storm, and prays that Heaven would watch over the safety of her children. Happy the day of their return, when the old man gets his sons and his daughters around him. They are his staff in the years of his infirmity. Sweet to his soul is the hour of family devotion—when he rises in gratitude to heaven for giving peace to his last days—when he prays God that He would take care of his children, that they may live to carry him to the burial-place of his fathers, and that they may all rise again to rejoice for ever in our Redeemer's kingdom.

"Then kneeling down to heaven's eternal King—
The Saint, the Father, and the husband prays;
Hope springs exulting on triumphant wing,
That thus they all shall meet in better days."

SERMON IV.

[The latter months of Dr. Chalmers' connection with Cavers were engrossed with the preparations for the ensuing winter, during which he taught the Mathematical Classes in the University of St. Andrews. These preparations, and perhaps also the hurry of separation, have left evident marks of haste upon this farewell discourse. The reader, besides, will notice that in two instances an "&c." is placed at the end of a paragraph. This mark frequently occurs in the manuscript of the earlier sermons, indicating the insertion at the time of delivery of some favorite passage previously written and committed to memory. A sermon so hurriedly written, so incomplete, and so fragmentary as that which follows, should not have been inserted had it not been that a comparison of its closing address, with the other farewell discourses given in this volume, promotes so largely one of the leading purposes of the present publication.]

TITUS I. 1.

"Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness."

It has been insinuated to the prejudice of our religion, that its effects are far from corresponding with the magnificent anticipations of its first founders. They predicted that in the establishment of Christianity we would enjoy the reign of benevolence and peace. But let us survey the broad aspect of the world and its inhabitants—the ambition which involves it in the miseries of war—the selfishness which is unmoved by the plaintive cry of distress—the deceit which fills the earth with the exclamations of the injured—the cruelty which feasts on spectacles of pain—the licentiousness which degenerates a people, as it withers the graces of youthful modesty—the superstition which in its groveling subjection to externals deserts the manly and respectable virtues of social life—surely wickedness aboundeth in the land, and the cry thereof ascendeth unto heaven. Are these the boasted effects of religion—of that religion which was to extend through the world the triumphs of truth and

virtue—of that religion which announced peace on earth and good-will to the children of men; and which promised to unite the world into one family by the sacred law of love? For what purpose that illustrious succession of prophets who appeared to alleviate the gloom and ignorance of antiquity? For what purpose did the Son of God descend from the celestial abodes of love and of virtue—live amid the sufferings of persecution and injustice, and die a martyr to that cause He had so nobly defended? Even now, though we possess the sacred treasure of His instructions—though refined by all the improvements of art—though educated in all the wisdom of the ancients—even now we exhibit the vices which disgraced an age of ignorance and barbarity. To palliate, however, the enormity of the picture, it may be urged that the most important effects of Christianity are from their nature invisible, while the prominent features of vice must strike the observation of the most superficial and indifferent. Vice stalks abroad, and exposes its shameless forehead in the face of day. It attracts attention by the glaring deformity of its character—by the tumultuous disorder it creates in society—by the outcry of those whom it injures—by the transitory splendor of its career—and by the disgraceful ignominy of its fall. Virtue seeks the shade; it shrinks from applause; it delights in peaceful, unostentatious retirement. To find virtue we must seek for it, because it shuns observation. Virtue is humble and unambitious of praise; it doeth good in secret; it is content with the gratitude of those orphans whom it shelters—of those aged to whose sickness it administers—of that family whom it rescues from want. It seeks something nobler than the applause of men. Amid the sufferings of contempt and injustice it is supported by the testimony of its own conscience, and by the prospect of that day when it shall be restored to its honors and invested with the glories of an immortal crown.

But though these considerations may seem in part to alleviate the darkness of the picture, and to console our feelings amid the multiplied displays of human vice, yet truth and justice force us to proclaim the affecting deprav-

ity of man. The more we extend our acquaintance with human life, the more we see of villainy in all its varieties. Here one feasting on the spoils of injustice and oppression —there another plotting his wiles of seduction; here one under the mask of friendship broods over dark and deceitful intentions—there another disguises the vices of his character in the parade and solemnity of religious observances; here parents living on the infamy of their children—there children afflicting the old age of their parents by their ingratitude. Who can enumerate the endless varieties of human guilt? Now envy sickens at the prospect of another's bliss—now calumny delights to spread its insidious poison—now licentiousness grovels in the low haunts of pollution—now cruelty rejoices in the crash of families. Yes, we have often heard the instructors of religion reproached for their sloth and indifference; but let critics remember that the scanty produce of the harvest may be imputed to the unmanageable nature of the soil as well as to the indolence of the husbandman; let them remember that the great obstacles to the advancement of religion exist among themselves; in the perverseness of their own character; in the restraints which their prejudices impose upon the efforts of pure and enlightened teachers; in their determined opposition to the practical and improving part of Christianity; in the baneful influence of that spurious and perverted orthodoxy which silences the remonstrances of conscience, and gives impunity to guilt. The business of a Christian minister is to hold up vice to infamy, and to denounce the thunders of heaven on the presumptuous. He should tremble to prostitute the honors of his Master's name by employing it to charm the wicked into security, and to save them from the troublesome restrictions of duty. He should scorn to lower the dignity of the pulpit by converting it into a vehicle of licentious instruction; and for whom? —to please the vilest and the meanest of mankind. He should impress upon their feelings that all the parade of external ordinances will not save the presumptuously wicked from the horrors of their impending punishment. No;

let them strive to get to heaven as they may by their punctualities and their externals—let them sit at the table of the Lord—let them drink of that wine which is the symbol of a Redeemer's blood—all their sighs and tears and heavenly aspirations will avail them nothing while they retain the deceitful malignity of their characters. No; the supernatural charms they ascribe to the sacramental cup will no more avail than the spells of conjurors or the delusions of witchcraft. They may eat and drink and retire from the ordinance of the Supper with the deceitful assurance of the Almighty's favor; but tremble, O hypocrites, you have drunk the poison of the soul; you have tasted the seeds of disease and death and everlasting destruction, &c.

However much the Church of Scotland may have suffered from the contempt and censure of its adversaries, there is one part of its constitution which will ever be admired by those who entertain a sincere and enlightened attachment to religion—that which ensures the independent provision of its ministers. When a teacher of religion derives his support from the spontaneous liberality of that congregation over which he presides, the chief care of his heart is often to please and not to instruct them—to flatter the vices of the rich, because he has much to expect from their bounty —to flatter the vices of the poor, because they compensate by their numbers for the smallness of their individual contributions. What can be expected from the efforts of an instructor fettered as he is by such shameful and humiliating restraints? It is in vain to look to him as the dignified and intrepid champion of pure Christianity; it is vain to hope that through his manly and disinterested efforts we shall behold the downfall of those corruptions which were grafted on the religion of Jesus in the dark ages of superstition. His instructions will not dispel prejudices but confirm them; will not correct the prevailing vices of sentiment but perpetuate the reign of ignorance and error, &c.

On terminating the short career of my labors as your religious instructor, it is natural to inquire what has been accomplished. We refer the answer to your own hearts.

It will be declared in your future conduct and conversation. Much must have been imperfectly understood, much has been forgotten, much may have excited a momentary impression of goodness, but an impression which has now been effaced amid the bustle and temptations of the world. Some we hope may have produced the fruits of righteousness and life everlasting. Have virtuous resolutions been confirmed? Has guilt been appalled in its career? Has the despair of the penitent been revived to confidence and joy? Has the gloom of affliction been brightened by the consoling prospects of immortality? Have the instructions you have heard been useful in protecting the young and inexperienced from the dangers of an ensnaring example, and from the artifices of an intriguing villainy? Have they been useful in alarming the careless indifference of parents to the moral and religious education of their offspring, and in teaching children to respect the authority of age? Have they been useful in humbling the pride of oppression, in exposing to contempt the infamy of falsehood, in detecting the baseness of calumny, or in impressing the terrors of vengeance on the determined impenitence of guilt? Have they been useful in alarming the impious security of the wicked, in teaching them that all creeds and all ordinances are unable to shelter them from judgment, and that their only refuge is a sincere and effectual repentance? Have they been useful in inspiring gratitude to Him who for our sakes lived a life of suffering and died a death of ignominy, whose morality has improved and adorned the face of society, and whose doctrines have ennobled the existence of man by unfolding to him the prospects of his immortal destiny? These are triumphs more ennobling to the teacher of virtue than all the splendor of opulence, or than all the authority of power. They will support his footsteps amid the storms of this dreary and tempestuous world: they will cheer the gloomy desolation of age, and be a sweet remembrance in the hour of death.

Let our last words be those of tenderness and affection. Let our parting admonition be reserved as the legacy of

friendship. You are in a world of care and suffering—now laboring under the embarrassments of poverty, now afflicted with the disgrace and ingratitude of children, now pining in the infirmity of disease, and now oppressed by the insolence of power. Hold fast to religion. It will console you amid the ills and perplexities of life; it will be unto you as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land; it will bless you in the evening of your days, and conduct you to the glories of an eternal world.

August, 28, 1802.

SERMON V.

[I am indebted for the following sermon to David Gillespie, Esq. of Mountquhannie. His father was one of the principal heritors in the parish of Kilmany, and many memorials survive at once of his early appreciation of the character and talents of his minister, and of Dr. Chalmers' grateful sense at the time, and affectionate remembrances ever afterward, of the kind attentions of his heritor. It could not have been possible for any one to have listened to this sermon without emotion. There were chords in the heart of its humblest hearer which it must have caused thrillingly to vibrate. But Mr. Gillespie was one of the very few hearers of it who could estimate its literary merits. Struck with these, he solicited a copy of it—the only one now remaining, the original not having been preserved. It fixes its own date: reference occurs in it to the Thanksgiving Day which, in the summer of the preceding year, was appointed to be observed in acknowledgment of the general peace secured by the treaty of Amiens. That treaty was signed in March, 1802. The war broke out again in May 1803, and Thursday, the 20th day of the October following, was, by public appointment, observed throughout Scotland as a Fast-day, not only on account of the renewal of hostilities between this country and France, but mainly because of that threat of invasion which Bonaparte hung over England, and by which the heart of the whole island was convulsed. It must have been upon this occasion—only a few months, therefore, after Dr. Chalmers' settlement at Kilmany—that this sermon was preached.]

PSALM XXVII. 3.

"Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear; though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident."

It is not my object to enter into any political discussion. The situation of the country is, I believe, forced upon us by the necessity of circumstances. It is a situation from which the most sincere and anxious efforts of Government could not have relieved us. It is a situation which I ascribe to no misconduct of Ministers—to no want of vigor or of sincerity—to no injurious encroachment on our part on the rights and privileges of other countries. It is a situation which I ascribe to the insolence of a haughty and resentful ambition—of an ambition which no sacrifice can

appease—of an ambition which grasps at universal empire, and threatens to erect its throne over the prostrated liberties of Europe. At all events, it is a situation to be deplored. Our own country may become the theater of blood and of violence. The widows and orphans of the slain may attest the numbers who have fallen in the cause of patriotism. Think not that the voice of pity will soften the destructive career of the invader. You have nothing to expect from the cannibal banditti of France: they have breasts of iron; they are hot from the plunder of other countries; they are trained to carnage and desolation; they have been taught to rejoice in the outcry of massacre, and to fly like bloodhounds to those towns and villages which their generals may have marked out for destruction.

A year is scarcely elapsed since we were called upon to commemorate an event of such grand and obvious importance—so eminently conducive to the interests of millions that the friends of humanity rejoiced, and Christians sent up to the throne of mercy their acclamations of gratitude, and in the transports of a patriotic enthusiasm forgot the interests and the virulence of party. Such was the event we had then to commemorate—not the delusive splendors of victory—not the phantom of national glory which serves to dazzle but not to exhilarate—not the glare and triumph of conquest to amuse a giddy and unthinking multitude. It was something more substantial—more felt in its operation on the interests of the country—more diffusive of its benefits through the walks of life and of business—more joyous to homes and to families. It was the re-establishment of peace among the nations. It was a respite from those evils which had desolated the unhappy regions of Europe. It was an end to the calamities of war, and to the restless anxiety of parents and of friends, who implored the protecting hand of Providence over the scenes of danger. In describing the miseries of war, shall I present to your imaginations scenes to which Britain has long been a stranger; contending armies met upon the awful work of death; men unknown to each other bent upon mutual

destruction; the earth bathed in the blood of thousands; and the cries of the wounded mingling with the shouts and the exultation of victory? Shall we walk over the fields of the slain, and survey the victims of a lawless ambition? One whom the romantic visions of glory had allured from the house of his fathers; who had resigned all the comforts and endearments of home at the call of honor: his career is run; no more shall he gladden the hearts of his friends by the tidings of his welfare. Heedless of the event, they cherish the fond hope of his return; but he has breathed his last afar from the abode of his infancy, without a friend to soothe his departure, or to protect his expiring moments from the cold blasts of midnight. Who can detail the pains and sufferings of a military life: now surrounded with the infection of an hospital; now pining in the famine of a siege; now tossed on the fury of the tempest; now languishing in the solitude of a prison? Who does not shudder at the destructive progress of an invading army? Galled with difficulties, inflamed with resistance, aroused by the blood of their fellow-companions to the stern purpose of revenge. Nor age can disarm their fury, nor beauty arrest their violence. The sword spreads its desolations among the families; the land is filled with the houses of mourning; the sounds of joy are for years extinguished, and the seats of industry converted into the abodes of silence and grief.

We are not yet relieved from these fearful apprehensions. The haughty and uncontrollable despot of France has not agreed to suspend his ambition, or to cease from troubling the repose of mankind. The nations of Europe hailed the approaching steps of peace with the acclamations of transport; but they have scarce had time to breathe from the toils and the fury of contention. The dire effusion of human blood has not been able to restrain the insolence of power —to control the vindictive fury of war—or to humble the lofty pride of ambition. But it is an ambition which shall not prevail. We trust in the unanimous resistance of a great and a high-spirited country. We trust in the integ-

rity of our cause. We trust in the valor of our countrymen: they will not fear to die in the animating cause of patriotism. We trust in the wisdom of our statesmen; they will blow the trumpet of war with the voice of irresistible eloquence. We trust in the skill of our commanders; they will inspire us with confidence, and lead us on to emulation and to victory.

The best security that a government can enjoy is in the hearts and sentiments of the people. In this point of view our situation is not so alarming as it was at the commencement of the French Revolution. An unbridled licentiousness of principle threatened the order and the security of social life. A perverted system of morality went far to exterminate the reign of justice. A contempt for the sacred institution of religion hardened the sensibilities against every amiable and tender impression. But experience has at length dispelled the magic of speculation. Its votaries have been forced, though with reluctance, to acknowledge that the delusions of fancy had led them astray, and that they erred in denouncing those virtues which have supported the prosperity of ages. Even the enlightened philosophers of the modern school look back on the extravagance of their former principles as the inexperience of enthusiasm and folly, and are heard to revere the home-bred maxims of their forefathers, though unaccompanied with the charms of novelty, the splendor of eloquence, or the magnificence of system.

From the recollection of past scenes there is a lesson we would wish to impress on all countries and on all people—a lesson recommended by the awful sanction of experience—a lesson written in the blood of thousands; the danger of heedless innovation, the fury of an irritated populace, though originally excited by the best of motives, and directed to the best of purposes. Who is there so seduced by the hypocrisy of profession as to look back with an approving eye on the whole progress of the French Revolution—on the disgraceful scenes of cruelty which were conducted under the semblance of patriotism and public zeal—on that

murderous spirit which actuated the rulers, and expended its fury on the innocent victims of injustice? Who is there so deluded by the modern systems of virtue as to suppress his abhorrence at their flagrant violations of truth, at their wanton invasion of a harmless and unresisting people, at that refined insincerity of character which, amid the praises of liberty, and the ardent declamations of humanity and feeling, is directing all its efforts against the independence of an outraged country? Alas! how much they have suffered, and how far they are behind us in all that conduces to the substantial prosperity of a nation: in stability of government, in the purity of its justice, in a quick and enlightened impression of the rights of man, in the energy of the public voice, and in contempt for oppression. In the pure administration of justice, in the progress of sentiment and character, in the individual reformation of a people, we discover a more substantial security against the infringements of rights, than in all the parade of constitutions, and in all the mockery of forms. Why fight for a republic—since the insolence of power will ever be able to establish the reign of despotism over a timid and an ignorant people, and all the authority of laws will be unable to restrain it. Why rejoice in the blood of kings—since a watchful and enlightened public will ever restrain the abuses of power, though emblazoned in all the splendor of titles, and supported by all the jurisprudence of antiquity. Let us never despair of the future improvement of mankind; let us never relax in our efforts to hasten the reign of perfection. But let us direct these efforts aright; not by instruments of violence, not by arousing the fury of a vindictive and as yet unenlightened populace, not by infringing on the sacred rights of property, not by trampling on the distinctions of rank. There is a certain point in the progress of national improvement which renders the degradation of a country impossible, and accelerates all its future advances in light and in liberty. That point we seem to have gained. It consists in the perfection of the national character—a perfection which renders it respectable in the eye of the rulers,

and gives an energy to its opinions sufficient to resist every flagrant violation of justice or freedom. Let us never despair of the unfailing efficacy of knowledge in conducting to the proudest summits of national felicity. Let every improvement be effected, not by the tumults of sedition or the agitations of party, but by the silent and progressive labors of instruction. Let us direct our efforts to the improvement of individual character, as the most solid and substantial foundation of public prosperity, to remove those prejudices in which ignorance involves the understanding, to dispel those unhappy and malignant impressions which separate the different orders of the community, and above all, to diffuse the admiration of virtue by the charms of our private example. These will secure to the Government of Britain the obedience of a free and a willing people, who know how to yield a ready acquiescence in the restrictions of a just and useful authority, and to sacrifice the petty competitions of interest and opinion to that unanimity which is the boast and protection of a country.

The situation of the country calls aloud for the unanimity of its inhabitants. We are not called upon to defend any particular order of men. We are not called upon to defend the principles and views of any party. We are not called upon to defend the possessions of the wealthy, or the rank of the noble. It is to defend ourselves. It is to defend the country from massacre: it is to defend it from the insolence of a brutal and unfeeling soldiery. Let it not be said that this is the cause of the great or the wealthy. That cottage which shelters you from the storms of winter, should be as dear to you as the stately palace is to the chieftain who resides in it. That little garden which you cultivate for the use of your family, should be as dear to you as the acres of an extensive domain are to its lordly proprietor. I have undergone several of the varieties of fortune. From the dependence of a child I have arrived through intermediate steps of preferment to a comfortable sufficiency of circumstances. When occupying the humbler situations of life, I felt the same interest in defense of the country that I do at

present, the same attachment to the cause of civil and religious security, the same contempt for oppression, the same stubborn and unbroken spirit of independence, the same determined opposition both to domestic tyranny and to the ignominy of a foreign yoke. True, I had little to lose, but that little was all that belonged to me. It supplied all the stores of my enjoyment. It filled up the measure of my humble and unambitious desires; and had it fallen a sacrifice to the rapacity of an invading army, it would have afflicted me with equal severity as the destruction of the house which I now occupy, of the land which I now cultivate, of the emoluments of the office which I now exercise —an office to the duties of which the remainder of my days may probably be consecrated. Let it not be said that you have no interest in the defense of the country. You may live in a straw-built shed, and have an equal interest with him who triumphs in all the magnificence of wealth, and is invested with the proudest honors of nobility. You may have children whose infancy you have protected, and to whose manhood you look forward as the support and consolation of your declining years. You may have parents whose age requires your protection; for even age will not soften the cruelty of your relentless enemies.

Let it not be said that discussions like these are a prostitution of the dignity of the pulpit, or an impertinent deviation from our official character to lend the authority of our profession to the aid of party, or to employ it in strengthening the yoke of despotism over an enslaved and persecuted people. I hope in God there is not a man among us who would not willingly renounce the smiles of the great and the patronage of power, rather than concur in supporting the measures of an arbitrary and oppressive government. We come forward not in the spirit of an accommodating policy. We come forward because it is the dictate of our own hearts, and the dictate of our own opinions. We come forward because we conceive it to be the duty of every good man in the present critical and alarming circumstances of the country. We come forward because it

is the cause of patriotism. It is the cause of civil and religious liberty. It is the cause of that Christianity that has been transmitted to us from our ancestors, and that we have been taught from our infancy to cherish and revere. Some of you may have heard of Lavater; he was a clergyman of the once free and independent country of Switzerland. He was one of the most eminent literary characters of his age. He had a mind formed for the profoundest investigations of science, and a heart animated by that mild and generous benevolence which the faith of Christianity inspires. He was at first a keen supporter of the French Revolution; he defended it by his writings, he hailed it as the commencement of a grand era—when liberty, and science, and virtue would expand their triumphs and erect an omnipotent empire. But the picture was soon changed. A few years had scarcely elapsed when he saw through the magic that had bewitched him. His own country was invaded by the French troops, and fell a prey to the most unexampled atrocities. In his retreat he wrote a pamphlet which I have myself seen.* He here discovers all the ardor of his patriotic mind, in the exclamations of disappointed benevolence, and in the afflicting regrets with which he contemplates the ruin of his countrymen.

Let us not tremble at the dangers which surround us. Let us not be afraid though an enemy should encamp against us. What, in the name of Heaven!—is it for us to resign our lives and our liberties to the insolence of lawless ambition! Is it for us to surrender those sacred privileges which were cemented by the blood of our ancestors! The pulse of a Briton beats high in the cause of independence. A contempt for oppression is the proudest sentiment of his heart. He has sucked it in from his infancy; it glows even in the humblest retreats of poverty; it ennobles the lowest retirements of life. Amid the shocks of misfortune he sustains the dignity of an unbroken spirit; he rejoices in his

* The pamphlet here alluded to is in all likelihood the one entitled "Remonstrance addressed to the Executive Directory of the French Republic against the Invasion of Switzerland. By John Caspar Lavater. London, 1798."

conscious importance, not as a favorite of fortune, not as the lordling of an extensive domain who exercises the reign of caprice over a tribe of dependents, not as the child of hereditary grandeur who can appeal to the honors of a remote and illustrious ancestry—he rejoices in his importance as a man—as a man whose rights are revered by the laws of his country, and whose virtues will be hailed by the voice of an applauding public. In a country such as this we have nothing to fear from the insolence of power; for it must submit to the severity of an impartial justice. In a country such as this we have nothing to fear from the corruption of our tribunals; for they feel that they are under the control of public opinion, and that all the splendor of official importance is unable to protect their injustice from the frown of a generous and enlightened people. In a country such as this we have nothing to fear from the efforts of sedition; for our common interests engage us to oppose it, and to control the violence of its deluded votaries. In a country such as this we have nothing to fear from the frenzy of revolutionary violence; for in the experience of our present blessings the unanimous sense of the people would rise to resist it. In a country such as this we have nothing to fear from the oppressions of an arbitrary government; for our rulers have learned to respect the energy of the public voice, and feel that their best security is in the hearts of their subjects. And shall such a country turn pale at the approach of an invader? Shall its patriotism wither and die in the hour of danger? Will it surrender that venerable system of law that has been created by the wisdom of ages? Will it surrender that throne which has been adorned by the private virtues of him who holds it? Will it surrender that Christianity which has been transmitted to us from our ancestors, and which we have been taught from our infancy to cherish and revere? Will it surrender those fields which the industry of its inhabitants has enriched with the fairest stores of cultivation? Will it surrender its towns and villages to destruction? Will it surrender its inhabitants to massacre? Will it surrender its homes to the insolence of

a brutal and unfeeling soldiery? No. Let the invader attempt it when he may, he will attempt it to his destruction. The pride of an indignant country will rise to overthrow the purposes of his ambition, and the splendor of his past victories will be tarnished in the disgrace that awaits him.

If true to ourselves we have nothing to fear from the insulting menaces of France. And can I for a moment cherish the disgraceful supposition—can I for a moment suppose that there is a man among us who would suffer his mind to be enfeebled by the cowardly apprehensions of danger? Can I for a moment suppose that there is a man among us who, in the present alarming circumstances, would prove false to the cause of his country? I would sooner open my door to the savage and murderous banditti of France than admit such a man into my confidence. Against an open enemy I can guard myself; he warns me of my danger; he throws me into a posture of defense, and I bid defiance to his rage. But the case is different with these insidious and designing men who lurk in the bosom of the country. They are snakes in the grass. They are asps of malignity whom we cherish in our bosoms. They are capable of violating the most sacred oaths, and betraying the best of friendships. Under the mask of patriotism they meditate their designs of treachery; and that country which, if firm and united, would bid defiance to the combined hostility of Europe, is delivered up a prey to all the horrors of insurrection. But I am satisfied that no such spirit exists in our neighborhood. I am satisfied that the breast of every man who now hears me is animated by a feeling of the purest patriotism—that the breast of every man who now hears me feels the proudest disdain that France or any power under heaven should insult our independence, and threaten to invade the peace of our dwellings.

May that day in which Bonaparte ascends the throne of Britain be the last of my existence; may I be the first to ascend the scaffold he erects to extinguish the worth and spirit of the country; may my blood mingle with the blood

of patriots; and may I die at the foot of that altar on which British independence is to be the victim. The future year is big with wonders. It may involve us in all the horrors of a desolating war. It may decide the complexion of the civilized world. It may decide the future tranquillity of ages. It may give an awful lesson to ambition; and teach the nations of Europe what it is to invade the shores of a great and a high-spirited country.

SERMON VI.

[During the two years which elapsed from the time at which the following discourse was written (July 2, 1808) till the period of that great revolution in his religious sentiments which took place in the years 1810 and 1811, this sermon was very frequently preached by, and was a special favorite of, its author. He retained, indeed, a strong partiality for it to the last, and delighted to tell of the incident to which it owed its birth. Walking on one of the public roads in Kilmany, he had come in sight of a family, the members of which were thus distributed. A few paces in advance—unburdened, his hands thrust lazily into his pockets, in his slouching gait having all the air of a man very much at his ease—strode on the husband. Behind—bent down, "a bairn in the one hand, and a bundle in the other"—the wearied wife and mother was struggling to keep pace with him. A perfect hurricane of indignation was awakened in the breast of Dr. Chalmers, when, on overtaking the group, he heard the man vehemently curse back at his wife as he ordered her to "come along." Dr. Chalmers never told how that hurricane discharged itself, or in what terms he administered the well-merited rebuke. Thought, however, as well as emotion, was excited: in contrast with the scene of rude barbarity he had witnessed, the pleasures and benefits of courteousness arose in vivid coloring before his eye. He went home—sat down to write. The fruit of that forenoon's incident and that evening's study is given in the discourse which follows.]

I. PETER III. 8.

"Be courteous."

Courteousness is the same with what in common language would be called civility of manners; but as the mind is often a slave to the imposition of words, it is necessary to distinguish it from something else, which, though very like it in sound, is very different from it in sense and in significancy. Let it be distinctly understood, then, that to be courteous is one thing, and to be courtly is another. The one refers to the disposition—the other to the external behavior. The one is a virtue—the other is an accomplishment. The one is grace of character: it resides in the soul, and consists in the benevolence of an amiable temper.

The other is grace of manner: it may be seen in the outward appearance, and consists in the elegance of a fashionable exterior. A man may be courteous without being courtly. To learn the virtue of the text, it is not necessary to go to court, or be practiced in the ceremonials of fine and polished society. Courteousness is the virtue of all ranks: it may be seen in the cottage as well as in the palace; in the artificer's shop as well as in the gay and fashionable assembly; in the awkwardness of a homely and untutored peasant, as well as in the refined condescension of a prince who wakens rapture in every heart, and spreads fascination and joy around his circle of delighted visitors. It is of importance not to confound what is so essentially different. A man may have civility without a particle of elegance, and a man may have elegance without a particle of civility. There is a set of people whom I can not bear —the pinks of fashionable propriety—whose every word is precise, and whose every movement is unexceptionable; but who, though versed in all the categories of polite behavior, have not a particle of soul or of cordiality about them. We allow that their manners may be abundantly correct. There may be elegance in every gesture, and gracefulness in every position; not a smile out of place, and not a step that would not bear the measurement of the severest scrutiny. This is all very fine; but what I want is the heart and the gayety of social intecourse—the frankness that spreads ease and animation around it—the eye that speaks affability to all, that chases timidity from every bosom, and tells every man in the company to be confident and happy. This is what I conceive to be the virtue of the text, and not the sickening formality of those who walk by rule, and would reduce the whole of human life to a wire-bound system of misery and constraint.

Civility has been called one of the lesser virtues of the social character. It does not stand so high in the order of social duty as virtue or humanity. It may be the same in principle, but it is different in the display. It may not be so essential to the constitution of society, but it comprises a

thousand engaging attentions which go far to keep society together, and confer an exquisite charm on the walks of social intercourse.

It may be difficult to assign a precise limit between civility and the other virtues of the social character. It is saying too much to say that to be civil is to lay yourself out for the accommodation of a neighbor. You accommodate the poor with money, yet nobody would say that this was doing a piece of civility; it is dignified with the higher appellation of humanity. You accommodate another when you lend your name to support the tottering credit of an acquaintance; yet nobody will say that it is civil, but that it is generous and beneficent. Civility, in fact, is confined to those lesser attentions which require no material sacrifice of time, or money, or interest; those little offices of kindness which can be discharged without loss and without trouble, which call for no painful exertion, and bring no sensible inconvenience along with them. To point the road to an inquiring traveler; to step forward and relieve the ignorance or the embarrassment of a stranger; to make soothing inquiries after the sickness which reigns in an adjoining family; to maintain a series of respectful attentions, and to carry the expression of kindness in your look and tone and general conversation—these are so many obvious examples of civility—a virtue in the observance of which you may be said to incur no fatigue, to surrender no interest, and submit to no sacrifice. To lend money in order to relieve the embarrassments of an unfortunate family is an example rather of humanity; for in this act of kindness you risk a material interest—the money may never be restored, and you secretly commit it to some future exercise of generosity to cancel the obligation. To lend books, again, in order to amuse the solitude of a convalescent neighbor, is an example of civility; for in this act of kindness you endanger no material interest, you apprehend no loss, no inconvenience—you feel confident that the books will be restored, and you have the satisfaction of spreading enjoyment around you at an expense that is scarcely felt, and

need never be complained of. You will observe, then, that civility approaches to the higher exercises of generosity by a limit which it is almost impossible to define with precision. Both of them point to a neighbor's happiness and a neighbor's accommodation: but in the one case you have to make a greater sacrifice of your own personal ease or personal advantage. Both of them have their foundation in a principle of kindness; but to be generous you must make some important sacrifice—to be civil the sacrifice must be so small as to encroach upon no material convenience, and to interfere with no serious pursuit of business or interest.

The advantages of civility may be referred to two general heads—1. The happiness which the very exercise of this virtue communicates to him who practices it; and, 2. The happiness which it communicates to those who are the objects of it. First, then, as to the happiness which springs from the exercise of this virtue, I appeal to the experience of every generous bosom if the exercise of kindness does not leave a sweet satisfaction behind it; and if it has never felt that harmony which reigns in the soul after it indulges in a benevolent affection. I appeal to the experience of every generous bosom if it is not more pleasant to return a civil answer to the inquiries of a traveler than to triumph in his helplessness, or to rejoice in his ignorance and his embarrassment. I appeal to the experience of every generous bosom if it is not more pleasant to dissipate the awkwardness of an inferior by the affability of our manners than to humble him into timidity, or to throw him at a mortifying distance by the *hauteur* and stiffness of our deportment. The benevolent Author of our frames has annexed a joy to every virtuous exercise of the heart; there is a pleasure accompanying the cordiality of good wishes and benevolent intentions. It may be difficult to describe the feeling; it is perhaps too simple to be taken to pieces and made the subject of a formal explanation; but every child of nature can lend his testimony to the reality of its existence. There is always a pleasure accompanying the

exercise of power, and the pleasure is heightened to a tenfold degree when this power is directed to the purposes of beneficence. Now there is not a man among us who is not in some degree invested with such a power. Every man among us has the power of diffusing satisfaction around him by the civility of his manners; he has it in his power to look with a brother's eye, and to gladden every bosom by the engaging affability of his deportment. I am not speaking of the happiness he communicates to others; I speak of the happiness he is providing for himself; I am telling him of the satisfaction of his own feelings, and of the joy that springs in the solitude of his own bosom when it is tuned to the purposes of kindness. Perhaps civility is more allied with a liberal and expanded principle of humanity than any other virtue of the social character. You may be just, but this justice is confined to the few individuals with whom you are connected in the walks of business; you may be generous, but this generosity is confined to the particular cases of distress which come under your observation; you may be patriotic, but this patriotism is confined to the narrow limits of the country in which you were born. The virtue of civility knows no exceptions. It embraces all; it asks no questions; nor does it hesitate and delay till it has ascertained its object. Civility is a general habit of kindness; it requires no particular claim upon its attentions. Enough for it that the object before you is a man. He may be an entire stranger; but this it conceives to be an additional call upon its exercise. The hurry of traveling supplies you with a thousand examples of such rapid intercourse, where you may never meet again till you meet in heaven, but where each has made the other happy by the interchange of obliging expressions, and an hour spent in the luxury of kindness. Now it is this circumstance which gives the virtue of civility such an exalted place in my estimation—the enlargement of that principle upon which it is founded, and the grandeur of that theater in which it expatiates. The principle is universal good will, and the theater is the world. There is something gen-

erous and expanding in the principle. It has no petty consideration to restrain it in its exercise; it calls for no claim, no terms of admittance; it is not your family or your neighborhood that introduces you to its attentions. Enough for it that you belong to the species—that you are a brother of the same nature—that you have a bosom which can be soothed by the accents of kindness, and a heart that feels the attentions of another to be gracious. Now the point which I am at present insisting upon is, that the exercise of such a principle confers happiness upon its possessor—that it carries along with it a series of the most animating and delightful sensations—that the tone of mind which accompanies the exercise of kindness is in the highest degree favorable to enjoyment—that good will is a pleasurable feeling—and that cheerfulness is ever the inheritance of him who moves along with his affections flying before him; with every feeling tuned to benevolence, and every wish directed to the happiness of others.

I am not calling upon you to make any romantic sacrifice, to give your goods to feed the poor, or to surrender a single portion of that time which interest tells you should be directed to the engagements of business. I am only calling upon you to cultivate that habitual kindness of spirit which discharges itself in the thousand little attentions of civility. I only call upon you to enter with cheerfulness into these minuter offices of kindness which come in your way and can be performed without trouble and without inconvenience. I only call upon you to come forward with the simple offering of kind looks and obliging expressions—to chase away the embarrassments of the awkward by the affability of your manners—and to delight the hearts of all around you by the consciousness that they possess your respect and tenderness. I protest that however difficult to describe the sensation, there is something in the feeling of a hearty good-will to another's happiness which is in the highest degree animating and delightful—that it blesses him who gives as well as him who receives it—that it is a spring of the most genial satisfaction to all who cherish it

—and that it is always sure to throw even into the solitude of a man's bosom the sunshine of tranquillity and cheerfulness. What a delightful contrast to those melancholy beings who have no heart—who never tasted the joys of cordiality, whose bosoms never warmed to the animating spectacle of another's bliss and another's gayety, who hedge themselves round with a set of the most freezing and repulsive ceremonies, who suffer none to approach them with confidence, who roll themselves up in their own solitary grandeur, and give to pride and to solemnity those hours which should have been spent in the interchange of agreeable manners and the luxury of social affections. I know not whether to hate or to pity them; but certain it is that they debar themselves from the choicest of all luxuries, and a luxury which no good mind would be willing to forego. Certain it is that the luxury of social affections is better than the parade and solemnity of forms—and that the vanity of their own importance is but a wretched atonement for the loss of those pleasures which spring from the exercise of kindness, and a heart that loves to indulge in another's joy.

In addition to the pleasure which springs from the very exercise of civility, there are other advantages which I forbear particularly to insist upon. I know nothing that is more calculated than a kind and conciliating manner to propitiate friends and secure the good wishes of all around you. It is the most popular of all virtues. It will go further to gain the affections of men than the most splendid deeds of beneficence. By relieving my wants you make me feel the load of an obligation; I blush at the humility of my own dependence, and am thrown to a most mortifying distance from that superior being whose beneficence sustains me.—An act of charity is an offering not to me but to my wants; an act of civility carries along with it a more immediate homage to myself. I am the object of charity because I need it; but I am the object of civility not because I need it, but because I am thought to deserve it. There is on this account a soothing flattery in the attentions of civility that is far more grateful to the bosom of man than any other act

or any other form of kindness which you choose to specify. It is not the favor which civility confers. The favor may of itself be a mere nothing—some obliging expression, or some soothing and attentive inquiry. It is the respect and tenderness which an act of civility implies; it is the delightful consciousness that I possess the sympathy of another's bosom. These are the feelings which give such a delicate charm to the exercises of civility, and bestow upon it a power over the affections of men which all the patronage of the great and all the charities of opulence can never equal. In addition to all this, let me also mention that the exercise of civility costs you nothing. It calls for no sacrifice of time or money or interest. There is nothing to fatigue or to consume you in this delightful exercise. It is the spontaneous flow of good affections, and consists in those little offices of kindness which can be discharged without trouble, and leave no loss or inconvenience behind them.

I now proceed to the second head of discourse, where I am to examine the happiness which civility confers upon those who are the objects of it. It is like the dew which droppeth upon the grass beneath. It blesses him who gives and him who receives it. The pleasure which we feel in receiving a kindness depends upon two causes: there is first the benefit conferred, and there is secondly, the agreeable feeling which springs in every bosom from its being the object of another's benevolence. In relieving the wretchedness of extreme poverty, the first is the predominant cause of the pleasure which we communicate. We have conferred an important benefit. We have appeased hunger, or given shelter to the naked and defenseless. In discharging an office of civility, again, the second is the predominant cause of the pleasure which we communicate. The benefit conferred may in itself have been of no consequence—a kind look or a respectful attention. The benefit may not be of such a kind as to better our circumstances, or bring along with it any other palpable advantage; but still there is a charm in the attentions of civility that is altogether independent of the benefit conferred. This charm lies in the con-

sciousness of being the object of another's kindness, and in being supported by the cordiality of another's attentions. It is a very gross way of calculating the matter to estimate the enjoyment which springs from benevolence by the magnitude of the gift which it confers. Civility presents no gift, but it comes forward with a far more delightful offering—the offering of agreeable attentions, and a manner expressive of cordiality and friendship. I maintain that the exercise of this virtue is more conducive to the happiness of society than the most liberal and expensive charities. What is it that perpetuates the harmony and friendship of a neighborhood? It is the interchange of respectful attentions, and the little endearing expressions of civility. What is it that creates quarrels and fills the whole village with the uproar of controversy? It may sometimes be the cruelty of injustice, but it is far oftener the insolence of disdain, the sullenness of an unaccommodating manner, the mortifying negligence of those who count you unworthy of their attentions. What is it that throws a sunshine into the habitations of the wretched? Your charity relieves, but your civility revives them; it restores them to the dignity of the species, and makes them forget the cruelty of those humiliations which misfortune has entailed upon them. The meal which comes from the great man's house sustains them, and they try to be grateful for it; but gratitude comes at will, when they receive their forenoon visit from the loveliest of human beings, whose delight is in the dwellings of the poor, who loves to cheer them by her attentions, and to bless by the affability of her manners those humble cottages which surround the princely mansion of her father. Yes, there is something in the attentions of civility that is calculated to warm and to exhilarate the human bosom. I am not speaking of a gift or of a benefit; but there is something in the very sense of another's kindness that carries along with it the most gracious of enjoyments. Now the kindness of charity may hurt or may mortify its object; but the kindness of civility has no alloy. It carries along with it all the power and insinuation of the most delicate flattery. It is a clear and un-

mixed feeling, altogether purified from the grossness of obligation, and from those galling reflections which are ever sure to accompany a sense of dependence. If civility can do so much, why, in the name of tenderness, should we withhold it? why refuse so simple an offering at the shrine of humanity? why retire to the solitude of our own importance, and disdain to mingle in kindness with those who are brethren of the same nature and children of the same beneficent Creator? We all sprung from heaven, and to heaven we are all pointing. Why should we cast out by the way? why deny so easy a sacrifice as the sacrifice of civility? why refuse so simple an offering as the offering of agreeable manners, and a countenance lightened up by the smiles of brotherhood and affection? what is it that induces you to withhold so easy an offering?—are you afraid of committing your dignity by excessive condescension? It is very true that the kindness of a weak man often exposes him to ridicule. But I do not suppose you to be weak. What I want at present is to communicate to your feelings the temper of benevolence—and I take it for granted that you have sense enough to direct you in the exercise of this principle. There is certainly a way of descending to the exercises of civility, and in such a manner as to save your dignity and to sustain the importance of your character. A man, if he is weak, will render himself ridiculous in any direction, whether it be on the side of excessive kindness or excessive anxiety to keep up his importance. A man may render himself ridiculous by his excessive humility, and he may render himself as ridiculous by the excessive grandeur and solemnity of his manners. I know not whether to laugh or to cry when I witness those ridiculous beings whose great effort and anxiety in this world is to keep up their dignity; who are so lofty and so inaccessible; who must not be touched; who shelter themselves under the defense of a stately ceremonial; and whose whole behavior is only calculated to overpower the diffident, or cause those who have a sufficient degree of nerve and firmness to be indifferent about them. Let me never hear, then, the argument of ridicule employed

to discourage the exercises of a kind and condescending civility. If people wish for amusement, I would direct them to the opposite extreme of character, and assure them that they will there meet with far better game for the exercise of ridicule. No; I would pity the weakness of those who were victims to an amiable but misguided benevolence of temper, while I would let out the full cry of ridicule against the wretched vanity of him who marches solemnly along, and thinks that by the stateliness of his manners he is to scatter awe and embarrassment around him.

I may observe that less evil results from the exercise of civility than any other virtue of the social character. It is in the power of charity to corrupt its object; it may tempt him to indolence; it may lead him to renounce all dependence upon himself; it may nourish the meanness and depravity of his character; it may lead him to hate exertion, and to resign without a sigh the dignity of independence. It could be easily proved that if charity were carried to its utmost extent, it would unhinge the constitution of society. It would expel from the land the blessings of industry. Every man would repose on the beneficence of another. Every incitement to diligence would be destroyed. The evils of poverty would multiply to such an extent as to be beyond the power even of the most unbounded charity to redress them; and instead of an elysium of love and of plenty, the country would present the nauseating spectacle of sloth and beggary and corruption. There is no such danger attending the exercise of civility. It draws no dependence along with it; it gladdens the heart without corrupting it. Instead of degrading, it has rather effect to cheer and elevate and sustain the character. I want not the charity of my neighbor so long as I can rely on the native independence of my own exertions; but I would like at all times to be supported by his friendship, to be delighted by the civility of his manners, and to rejoice in the maintenance of a soothing and agreeable fellowship.

I also observe that the power of diffusing happiness is not the exclusive inheritance of the rich. All are capable of it.

The poorest of men can cheer me by his affection, or distress me by his hatred and contempt. He may not be able to relieve me by his wealth, but he is at least able to delight me by his civility. Every man is the dependent of another. A piece of neglect, even from the lowest and most contemptible of men, is fit to ruffle the tranquillity of my happiness; and a civil attention, even from the humblest of our kind, carries a most gracious and exhilarating influence along with it. Let me never hear, then, that the poor have nothing in their power. They have it in their power to give or to withhold civility of manners. They have it in their power to give or to withhold friendly attentions. They have it in their power to give or to withhold kind and obliging expressions. They have it in their power to give or to withhold the smiles of affection and the sincerity of a tender attachment. Let not these humble offerings of poverty be disregarded. The man of sentiment knows how to value them: he prizes them as the best deeds of beneficence. They lighten the weary anxieties of this world, and carry him on with a cheerful heart to the end of his journey.

July 2, 1808.

SERMON VII.

[In February, 1809, shortly after the honorable but disastrous battle of Corunna, a national fast was kept—on the day of the observance of which the following sermon was delivered. In the fast-day sermon of 1803, the reader can scarcely fail to have been struck with the absence, not merely of any allusion to the peculiar doctrines of Christianity, but of any distinct recognition even of Divine Providence. In this fast-day of 1809, the supremacy of God and of His government is not only very fully acknowledged, but very earnestly insisted on. The contrast between the two discourses marks a stage in that progress which this volume is meant to trace.]

PROVERBS XXI. 1.

"The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will."

It is consolatory to think that this earthly scene, in spite of the misery and apparent confusion which prevail in it, is under the absolute control of infinite wisdom—that the God who sitteth above and reigns in heaven, also presides over the destinies of this lower world—that every event in history is of His appointment—that every occurrence in the course of human affairs is in the order of His providence—that He reigns in the heart of man, and can control all its purposes—that the violence of human ambition is only an instrument which He employs, to carry on His government and accomplish the purposes of His wisdom. When we see combined in the same person the genius of an angel and the malignity of a tyrant—when we see a power that no human energy can resist, and this power directed to the slavery and degradation of the species—when we see strewed around his throne the mangled liberties of a generous and intrepid people—when we follow him in the brilliant career of his victories, and in the history of his guilty triumphs anticipate the new miseries which his ambition is to bring upon the world, it certainly brightens up the dreariness that lies before us when we think that he

is only an instrument in the hand of the Almighty—that it is God that worketh in him to will and to do—that the heart of man is in the Lord's hand as the rivers of water, and that He turneth it wheresoever He will. It is the sublimest exercise of piety to refer everything around us to the wisdom of God—to acknowledge Him in all the events of His providence—to place our refuge in His wisdom in the evil days of darkness and disorder, and to rest our confidence on that Almighty Being who sitteth above, and presides in high authority over the theater of human affairs. Such are the consolations of piety—such the elevation of heart which religion confers—an elevation which the world knoweth not, and which the tyrant of this world cannot take away. Life is short, and its anxieties are soon over. The glories even of the conqueror will soon find their hiding-place in the grave. In a few years, and that power which appalls the world will feel all the weakness of mortality—the sentence of all must pursue him—the fate of all must overtake him; he must divest himself of his glories, and lie down with the meanest of his slaves—that ambition which aspires to the dominion of the whole earth, will at last have but a spot of dust to repose on—it will be cut short in the midst of its triumphs—it will sleep from all its anxieties, and be fast locked in the insensibility of death. There the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest.

We live in a busy and interesting period. Every year gives a new turn to the history of the world, and throws a new complexion over the aspect of political affairs. The wars of other times shrink into insignificance when compared with the grand contest which now embroils the whole of civilized society. They were paltry in their origin—they were trifling in their object—they were humble and insignificant in their consequences. A war of the last generation left the nations of Europe in the same relative situation in which it found them; but war now is on a scale of magnitude that is quite unexampled in the history of modern times. Not to decide some point of jealousy or

to secure some trifling possessions, it embraces a grander interest—it involves the great questions of Existence and Liberty. Every war is signalized with the wreck of some old empire and the establishment of a new one—all the visions of romance are authenticated in the realities which pass before us—the emigration of one royal family, the flight and the imprisonment of another, the degradation of a third to all the obscurity of private life—these are events which have ceased to astonish us because their novelty is over, and they are of a piece with those wonderful changes which the crowded history of these few years presents to our remembrance. Such a period as this then gives full scope for the exercise of piety. Let everything be referred to God; in this diversity of operations, let us remember that it is He who worketh all in all—let us recognize Him as the author of all these wonders—and amid this bewildering variety of objects, let us never lose sight of that mighty Being who sustains all and directs all. It is His judgments that are abroad in the world—it is His magnificent plans that are verging to their accomplishment—it is His system of beauty and order and wisdom, that is to proceed from this wild uproar of human passions. He can restrain the remainder of human wrath—He can allay the fury and the turbulence of human ambition—He can make order spring out of confusion, and attune every heart and every will to His purposes.

Let it not be disguised. There is ground for apprehension in the character and talents of the enemy. There is a wisdom in his politics, there is a power and a rapidity in his decisions, there is a mysterious energy in his character, there is a wealth and a population in his empire that are sufficient to account for that tide of success which has accompanied him in all his efforts against the imbecility of the old governments. The governments he had to contend with were old, and they had all the infirmities of age. They wanted that vigor and impulse and purity which a revolution communicates to every department of the State. With the one party we see an energy

pervading every department of the public service—with the other we see the most important administrations intrusted to the minions of a court, to the puny lordlings of hereditary grandeur—a set of beings who had nothing to sustain them but the smile of a minister, or nothing to protect them from insignificance but the blazoned heraldry of their ancestors. There is no denying that in France the military appointments are decided by the questions of merit and fitness and character. In the other countries of Europe—and I blush to say that even in this vaunted abode of purity and of patriotism, almost everything connected with the interest of the public comes under the putrifying touch of money or of politics—that corruption has insinuated itself into every department of the State—that men are summoned up into offices of distinction who are only calculated to cover a nation with disgrace, and expose it to the derision of its enemies—that the public voice has lost its energy, and the united indignation of a whole people is often unable to drag to punishment those delinquents whom patronage has exalted and the smiles of a court have sheltered from infamy. This surely affords a heartless and a mortifying spectacle, and is calculated to alarm any lover of his country when he compares it with that dreadful energy which its enemies can muster up to overwhelm it. We see no imbecility there—no corruption in the military appointments of Bonaparte—no submissive accommodation to the interest of great families—the truth is, that his power renders him independent of it. In him we see vested in one person the simple energy of a despotism. He is so far exalted above the greatest of his subjects that to his eye all are equal. He needs not to temporize or accommodate or allure the friendship of a great family with the bribery of corruption—he throws open the career of preferment to the whole of his immense population—he calls upon all to enter into this generous and aspiring competition of talent, and it is a competition that has often exalted the veriest child of raggedness and obscurity to the proudest offices of the empire. I do not speak in the tone of dis-

affection—I speak in the tone of patriotism. I do not mean to pursue the errors of my Government in the spirit of hostility—it is in that spirit of regret that proceeds from the sincerity of my attachment—from my conviction that the Government of England is worth the contending for—that every lover of his country should stand by it to maintain its purity, as well as to defend its existence—that he should not only risk his life in fighting the battles of his country against the enemies of its independence, but that he should risk all the advantages of patronage and preferment in fighting the battles of the Constitution against the enemies of its purity and its vigor. Let us hope that the present state of affairs will operate as an effectual lesson to the rulers of the country—that the sense of danger will animate the public mind to all the enthusiasm of virtue—that the ardor of patriotism will chase away all the obliquities of a selfish and interested politics—that our legislation will turn with shame from the low game of party dissension, and lend their unanimity to that noble struggle that is to decide the liberty of the future age, and give a lasting complexion to the history of future times. But let us not forget our dependence upon God—that mighty Being who reigns supreme over the will of man, and exerts an absolute control over all hearts and all purposes. He who hardened the heart of Pharaoh against the calamities of his country can exert the same influence over the minds of the rulers of the present day. He can infatuate the mind of the country against the feeling of its dangers—He can throw a slumbering indifference over the land—He can lay us asleep on the brink of destruction, and send that torpor, that security into the hearts of our rulers which is the melancholy symptom of a falling empire. But we hope better things; that the same God who can turn the heart of man wheresoever He will, will send a wise and a righteous spirit over the government of public affairs—that the country will awaken to its dangers—and that purity and patriotism will at length preside over the administration of its interests.

In this day set apart for the expression of public senti-

ments, you should rise in gratitude to the Ruler of nations, that mighty Being who has turned the battle from your gates; who has singled you out among the countries of Europe, and given you the exclusive privilege of living in peace while the world around you is involved in all the cruelty and turbulence of war. I fear that none of us have a lively enough conception of the gratitude that we ought to feel for so inestimable a blessing—that we live in the bosom of domestic tranquillity—that we have no midnight alarm to disturb us—no sound of horror to strike upon our ear, and keep us awake and trembling in the agony of apprehension—no moaning of wounded acquaintances—no shrieks of the dying to rend the heart of sensibility—no hostile footsteps to warn us of the nearness of a brutal and enraged soldiery—no loud and stormy reproaches, to send anguish into the mother's heart, and make her weep in the wildness of despair over the members of her shrinking and devoted family. What a picture of horror—the seat of war—when the marauding army of the conqueror is let loose upon the country—when they separate into parties, and each singles out its own house or its own neighborhood as the object of its brutality and its vengeance—when every nerve is strained to deeds of barbarity—when pity is laughed at as a weakness, or its gentle whispers are drowned in the wild uproar of rapacity and desolation and murder. What a contrast to the country in which we live!—what a spectacle of peace in the midst of a wild and troubled theater! What would not the houseless victims of Spain give for the warmth and security of our dwellings?—where every man lives under his own vine and his own fig-tree—where he steps forth in the morning and prosecutes in safety the labors of the day—where he returns in the evening, and has his peaceful fireside enlivened by the smiling aspect of his family around him—where the Sabbath morn still continues to bless the humble abode of the poor man and of the laborer—where the church-bell is still heard to waft its delightful music along our valleys, and to call an assembled people to the exercises of piety. Let

the piety of this day be gratitude to that mighty Being who takes up the hills in His hands, and weighs the nations in a balance. He has thrown around our happy country the shelter of a protecting ocean—He has mustered His own elements to defend us. The green island of the north sits in the bosom of security—it hears the sound of the battle from afar, but quietness dwells there, and peace and joy are among its children.

Look at the extent of Britain, and it is a speck on the surface of the world. Look at the map, and it appears like an humble appendage to that immense continent that is in arms against it. Yet how high it stands in the proud lists of glory—how great in the independence of its empire —how awful in the thunder of its power that is heard in the remotest corners of the world—how firm in the patriotism and intrepidity of its people, who rally round the standard of their liberties, and maintain the name and the dignity of their nation against the fury of a devouring ambition!

We have to thank the God of battles that Britain, though deceived perhaps in her aspiring wishes for the liberties of Europe—yet that Britain herself stands as secure and as independent as ever. In the very last event of her history there may have been disaster, but there has been no disgrace —there may have been loss, but there has been no infamy —there may have been retreat from the power of numbers, but even this retreat has been emblazoned in the splendors of victory, and the annals of our country's renown are crowded with the names of dead and of living heroes. Grant that we abandon the liberty of Europe—yet the question of Britain's liberty is entire. We are no worse than before. The enemy does not stand in a more menacing attitude—nor does invasion lower more frightfully than at first upon our beloved island. The country has witnessed the talent and the prowess of our commanders—its confidence is exalted. Our late campaigns have furnished a most useful accession to military skill and military experience. That alarm which seized our politicians at the bugbear of our commercial embarrassments has subsided. It

is not above a year since it was anticipated, from the suspension of all intercourse with other nations, that something in the shape of a convulsion was to come upon the country. The convulsion has never made its appearance—it has spared us for one year, and it will spare us for twenty, if circumstances impose upon us the necessity of prolonging the experiment to such an extent. The public interest is as flourishing as ever. We witness the same animation and extent and prosperity in all the departments, both of the public service and of private industry. The experience of every day is vindicating to the eyes of the world the independence of our resources, and that we have a vigor within which is native and inherent and imperishable.

Do not think that I am turning your attention from religion to politics. I am enumerating the circumstances on which your prosperity is founded; but I give God the glory and the praise for being the author of these circumstances. The explanation of any event or of any appearance upon natural principles should have no effect whatever in extinguishing piety. I am correct in saying, that we enjoy light in the day-time, because then the sun is above the horizon; but it does not therefore follow that I stop short at this explanation—that I forget that mighty Being who gave the sun its existence, who fixed this astonishing mass of luminous matter in the center of our system, and bade it give light and cheerfulness and joy to the worlds that roll around it. I am correct in saying that the future security and independence of our empire is founded on the patriotism of our people, on the attachment which the country feels to its government, and on the extent of those resources which it is the province of an enlightened economy to unfold and to establish; but it does not follow that I overlook God—that I withdraw your attention from Him who is the author of all facts and of all principles—that I withhold the homage of my gratitude and my piety from that great comprehensive power that presides in high authority over the moral as well as over the material universe—or that I offer an idolatry to second causes, which I would take away from

that supreme and animating mind that formed all things and sustains all things.

A dark and tremendous uncertainty hangs over the future history of the world. Events succeed each other with a rapidity that absolutely benumbs the faculties, and annihilates the sensation of wonder. As much happens in the space of a single year, as would formerly have been enough to signalize a whole century. During the wars of Frederick of Prussia, all Europe hung upon his enterprises —every eye was turned as to a splendid theater, where the genius and intrepidity of a great man commanded the homage of an admiring world, and the report of his victories filled all people with terror and astonishment. This same Prussia is annihilated in the space of a few days—and mark the difference of the public mind: it has ceased to be spoken of. All the interest and wonder and novelty of this great occurrence evaporates in the course of a single month. The attention of the public is hurried away to other objects—new scenery is presented to engross every eye and eclipse the memory of the old. The mind is fatigued with the rapidity of the succession—it seeks for repose in indifference—and the same public that was once so feelingly alive to the fate of a ruined kingdom or the interests of a trifling principality, would now slumber in apathy though all Europe were in commotion, and its oldest empires fell in this wild war of turbulence and disorder.

Let us rise in gratitude to Heaven that we stand aloof from this theater of convulsions. Our security depends upon ourselves. No wisdom, no energy can save us, if we flinch from the cause of patriotism and virtue. The strength of a country lies in the heart of its inhabitants. This is a day of fasting; but we should remember that to fast is to repent, and to repent is to reform. It is not the visionary reform of political enthusiasts that I speak of—it is a reform in the lives and hearts of individuals—that reform which would settle the reign of integrity in the councils of our nation, and would settle the influence of piety among our

families and cottages—that reform which would descend to your children, and secure the character of yet future ages—that reform of which every great man should give the example that every poor man should be proud to imitate—that reform which would reconcile all the orders of the community, and make them feel that they had but one cause and one interest—that reform which would banish prejudice and disaffection from the land, and bind to the throne of a beloved sovereign the homage of a virtuous and affectionate people.

SERMON VIII.

[The year 1810 was the transition period in the religious history of Dr. Chalmers. Death had thrice entered the circle of his nearest relationship. He himself had been trembling on the very border of the grave. An illness which for four months confined him to his room, and for more than half a year rendered him unfit for all public duty, had brought death and eternity very near to his thoughts. He was engaged, besides, in drawing up the article "Christianity" for the Edinburgh Encyclopædia—in preparing which, the primitive Christians—their characters—their lives—their death—had become the object of an intensely interesting contemplation. Traces of all the different influences to which he was thus exposed, as well as of the effects produced by them, reveal themselves in the two succeeding sermons, and in the prayers and addresses which accompany them—all of which belong to the same memorable year.]

PRAYER.

We desire, O Lord, to pay Thee the homage of our humility and of our gratitude—of our gratitude, because of the multitude of Thy mercies, and of our humility, because we are unworthy of the least of them. We are the feeble insects of an hour—Thou art the Ancient of days. Thy duration has no end, and Thou art wrapt up in the still more awful mystery of having never had a beginning. The little circle in which we move is but a spot in the immensity of Thy works. Thy presence fills all space, and extends through the immeasurable fields of creation. All the powers of our thought and of our attention are taken up with the petty interests of an individual, or with the humble concerns of a family. But Thine all-seeing mind is every where; it presides in high authority over all worlds; it takes in at a single glance the endless varieties of life, and motion, and intelligence—nor can the minutest of Thy works escape for a single moment Thy notice and Thy direction.

Blessed be Thy name we are permitted to approach Thee. We are Thy creatures, and have the privilege of Thy mercy. Thine all-seeing eye never abandons us—Thou hast given us a part in this wide scene of magnificence and glory—Thou hast taught us to confide in Thy goodness, and given it to feeble, wretched, sinful man to rejoice in the hand that formed, and in the right hand that guides and sustains him.

But how miserable our returns of gratitude and obedience! Alas, we have corrupted our ways—we are children of guilt and disobedience. Look, O Lord, with an eye of pity upon our weakness and upon our errors. Alas! how feeble, how capricious, how ineffectual are our best attempts to love and to serve Thee! We may form a momentary purpose of goodness, but it is speedily lost in the folly and dissipation of the world. In the quietness of solitude our hearts rise to Thee, and taste the elevation of piety. In the walks of active life this loftiness of sentiment is forgotten—we mingle in the pursuits of the world, and are driven along by the vanity of its perishable interests. In the hour of sickness we shake off the anxieties of time, and take a near and an intimate view of the vast eternity which lies before us. In the hour of health the infatuation returns—we place death and eternity at a distance; we get surrounded with the variety of this world's objects—they exert an irresistible dominion over our senses—time becomes every thing, and eternity nothing. The futurity which lies on the other side of time and of the grave is never thought of, or never thought of with improvement. We lose all the impression, all the earnestness of our religious convictions; this world lords it over us. Are we grieved? it is at this world's disappointments. Are we angry? it is at this world's provocations. Are we glad? it is at this world's prosperity. Are we thoughtful? it is about this world's paltry and evanescent interests. The mind loses its elevation; it lets itself down from the grandeur of eternity; it becomes a slave to the delusions of time, and suffers the vanities of an instant to engross all its cares and all its anxiety.

We lament before Thee, O Lord, our hardened indifference in matters of religion—that we should be so blind to the importance and the magnitude of its interests—that it should occupy so small a portion of our anxiety—that eternity should so seldom be present to our thoughts, while this world, and the things of this world, are suffered to exert an entire dominion over all our desires and all our faculties. Deliver us, O Lord, from an infatuation so ruinous, so unreasonable, so unworthy of beings capable of wisdom and of reflection, and all of whom have a death to endure and an immortality to prepare for. Fill our hearts with serious and permanent and habitual impressions of religion. May it be something more than the momentary impulse of an occasion—something more than that momentary feeling which is excited by the eloquence of a sermon, the enthusiasm of a prayer, or the elevation of a mind which gives an hour to retirement, and forms its romantic purposes at a distance from the cares and distractions of the world—something more than that holy rapture which kindles in the bosom when the table of the Lord is spread, and the man of God invites us to approach it—something more than those sweet and heavenly emotions which so often fill the heart of the Christian in the solitude of a Sabbath evening, when quietness is on all the hills, and every thing breathes

peace and piety around him. May the preparations of solitude tell upon our conduct in the walks of business and society. May the principles which are formed in retirement have vigor to withstand the difficulties of life and the formidable temptations of the world.

May our religion not be confined to the solemnity of ordinances. May its empire be established in our hearts. May it reign supreme over the thoughts and purposes and affections. May it be with us in solitude as well as in society—in the house of business as well as in the house of prayer and the meetings of the solemn assembly. Let it be the study of our lives to advance the honor of the true religion, and to extend its influence in the world; and may we ever remember that the most effectual method of recommending it to the world is to hold out to its view the peaceable fruits of righteousness. May it be the study of our lives to hold out a graceful and an alluring picture of Christianity to the world—to let the world see what the religion of Jesus is capable of effecting—what worth and what embellishment it gives to the character of every true disciple—what graces adorn the walks both of his private and his public history—the honor which reigns over all his transactions—his noble integrity in business—the generous humanity with which he devotes his time and attention to the interests of the species—the pure and unsullied temperance of his life—the virtuous authority with which he discharges the duties of a father, a master, and a husband—the quietness of his happy home, where affection reigns in every heart, and peace sheds a holy calm over the feelings and tempers of a united family.

LEVITICUS XXVI. 34.

"Then shall the land enjoy her sabbaths, as long as it lieth desolate, and ye be in your enemies' land; even then shall the land rest, and enjoy her sabbaths."

The rest which was promised to the land of Israel is very different from the rest which we enjoy. The land was to rest in the absence of its people. It was to rest for the wickedness of its people, while they were suffering under all the horrors of captivity and imprisonment. It was not the calm and peaceful tranquillity under which we live; it was the silence of desolation; it was the calm which follows after the horrors of a tempest; it was the stillness of a depopulated country—the gloomy picture of ruined towns and deserted villages, where the battle had just ceased to rage, and the sword had accomplished the work of slaughter and extermination. How different from the smiling aspect of the country around us! I wish to call your attention to it,

that you may rise in gratitude to the God of all your mercies, because he has kept the battle from your gates—because you enjoy your sacraments in peace, and the quietness of the Sabbath morn still continues to bless the humble abodes of the poor man and of the laborer. You live, as your fathers did before you, in the bosom of security—you have quietness in your dwellings—the sound of the church-bell is still heard to waft its peaceful music through the valley in which we live—the people repair to the house of God, where they may join in the praises of their Redeemer without danger and without interruption. How fresh the morning of this hallowed day! The sun has mounted high in the firmament of heaven. Peacefulness rests on the bosom of every field—the sound of the battle is afar. Every thing speaks the goodness of the most High—and that the sheltering arm of the Omnipotent is around us. He is in this house; His eye is continually upon us: "Where two or three are met together, there I will be with you." He will receive the penitence and the praises of an assembled people: He marks the purposes of every heart: His eye is upon the young when they lift their holy prayer, and breathe the purposes of piety.

The solemnity of a communion Sabbath has always impressed me as the most decent and affecting of all spectacles—when we see the Christians of all ranks and of all ages sitting down at the table and joining in the common prayer of penitence and of piety—celebrating the praises of that Redeemer who died for them—and obeying the sacred call which He left in charge to His disciples: "Do this in remembrance of me—do this till I come again." You are doing what your fathers have done before you, and what your children will continue to do after you. The name of the Lord will be held in everlasting remembrance. The ordinance of the Supper will be kept up till the end of the world—till He comes again, and the sound of the last trumpet announces the termination of all things.

The best evidence of our gratitude for the peace which we enjoy in celebrating the sacrament, is to celebrate the

sacrament aright; and for this purpose let me study to impress upon you a few of those sentiments which this important and affecting ordinance is calculated to awaken.

The first sentiment which I shall endeavor to impress upon you is a sentiment of thankfulness. The second is a sentiment of pious obedience to the law of Heaven. The third is a sentiment of the vanity of time; and of the importance of religion, which reaches beyond time, and discloses to us the splendors of an everlasting world.

The first sentiment which I shall attempt to impress upon you is a sentiment of thankfulness. You are the creatures of grace and of forgiveness; you are the helpless victims of your own feebleness. You had thrown yourselves out from the approbation of God and the hopes of immortality. Nothing awaited you but a fearful looking for of judgment, and utter exclusion from the Redeemer's kingdom. Every day you offend the God of your mercies, and every hour of your life you come short of His glory. The degeneracy of man is a doctrine too humble for the admirers of a self-sufficient and ostentatious philosophy. It is not fashionable. It wants elegance to recommend it, and some fine genius to throw around it the graces and the embellishments of oratory. There are some who turn from the humility of the gospel with repugnance and disgust—who delight to expatiate in the higher fields of eloquence and sentiment, and ravish the ears of a cultivated audience with the beauties of virtue and the dignity of that mind which can maintain the rectitude of its own purposes. But we have only to open our eyes and be convinced that this is the mockery of a warm imagination—that however beautiful the picture, it wants truth to support it; that it is not confirmed by the evidence of observation; and however much we may love to dwell on the fancied scenes of perfection, they want both the gravity of wisdom and the sobriety of experience. No, my brother, there is no getting over it. Man is corrupt, and the testimony of every thing around us loudly proclaims it. We have only to consult our own hearts, and to take a lesson from the testimony of our own senses. In every

thing we see a want of firmness—a want of perseverance —a number of melancholy backslidings from the path of obedience—an insensibility to the awful considerations of heaven and immortality—an estrangement from God—an entire slavery of the mind to the trifles of sense and of time —and a thousand examples of wickedness which proclaim our principles to be unhinged, and the moral constitution of man to be enfeebled. With such a multitude of testimonies before you, can you deny the necessity of a Saviour—can you deny the homage of your gratitude to that mighty Being who came to relieve you from this body of death, and to unbar the gates of immortality to a despairing world? You had corrupted your ways; you had relapsed into disobedience. The offense of our first parents had entailed feebleness upon all their posterity—the whole heart was sick and the whole head was sore—and man stood the trembling victim of his own disobedience, ready to be crushed by the finger of Omnipotence, and to appease the fury of an offended Lawgiver. But a Star appeared in the east. The dayspring from on high visited us. A voice was heard proclaiming glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, and good-will to the children of men. Our Saviour came down from heaven. He left the bosom of His father—He resigned the glories of His nature—He arrayed himself in the garb of humanity—He took upon Him the infirmities of a man—He made Himself of no reputation, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. And He died that we might live—He died for the salvation of a world from which He received nothing but persecution and ingratitude—He died to accomplish the benevolent purposes of heaven—He died to establish the reign of mercy and to restore the children of Adam to the smiles of a reconciled Father. You weep over the recollection of His sufferings. You rise in gratitude to the God who created, and to the Saviour who died for you. Your hearts warm within you when you touch the affecting memorials of His death—and may you prize His last words as the best of legacies: "Do this in rememberance of me; do this till I come again."

The next sentiment which I shall attempt to impress upon you is a sentiment of pious obedience to the law of heaven. It is quite in vain to say that the faith of the New Testament excludes obedience. Faith gives new vigor to your obedience. It is the principle of obedience, and obedience is the best evidence of, and the best testimony to the purity of your faith. What faith could be livelier than that of the primitive Christians; and where, I would ask, in the whole history of the Church, shall we find obedience more perfect, more zealous, more persevering, and more steadily maintained in opposition to all the dangers of persecution, and to all the terrors of the world? Did the apostles of Christianity conceive that the faith of their Master exempted them from the law of obedience? They had faith; but did this faith extinguish their activity—did it render them indifferent to duty and to practice—did it set them loose from the restraints of morality—or did it exempt them from the labors of a life spent in the exercise of Christian virtues, and devoted to the maintenance of its cause? Take the Apostle Paul for an example. Whose faith more ardent, and whose life at the same time more laborious? He did not spend his time in the indolence of speculation. He had faith; but faith was not enough for him. His life was spent in the duties of an active profession; he went about preaching to all nations, and in so doing he gave an example of practical obedience; he gave the example of a good work, and in so doing he rendered it evident to all succeeding Christians that good works form a necessary part of religion. In the performance of this good work he braved every danger; he set his face to every difficulty; he spent a life of the most unwearied exertion, and taught us by his own example that to be a Christian is something more than to believe—that it is to do, and to practice, and to obey. You are also called upon to the performance of good works; and remember that you have not the same difficulties to oppose your progress, or to damp your ardor in the service of Christ. It is a good work that you are at present engaged in. You are sitting at the table of the Lord, and in so doing

you are going through an active obedience; you are performing a duty; you are giving an example of allegiance to the law of the gospel; you are obeying one of the commandments—Do this in remembrance of me; do this till I come again. Let me never hear then of any contempt for practical righteousness. If works are to be excluded from the system of Christianity, why undertake the work in which you are at present engaged—why join in the sacrament? for what is the sacrament but an example of practical obedience, and an observance of one of those laws which our Saviour left in charge to His disciples? But remember that it is not the only law which you are called upon to observe. There are other laws, there are other duties, there are other acts of obedience which deserve your attention, and the neglect of which would render the sacrament useless, and the profession that you now make an idle mockery in the face of heaven. For what purpose do you sit at the table of the Lord?—Is it not to testify your gratitude for the benefits of His redeeming mercy? Now, is it possible that you can be sincerely thankful to a Being whose authority you trample on, whose will you disregard, whose commandments you violate? No, my brethren, there is no getting over it. Without holiness no man shall see God. The necessity of practical righteousness may be seen in every page of the New Testament. The same authority that calls upon you to join in the sacrament, also calls upon you to attend to the duties of ordinary life.—Do to others as you would wish them to do to you.—Speak not evil one of another.—In brotherly love and in honor prefer one another.—Behave peaceably to all men.—Visit the fatherless and the widow in their afflictions, and keep yourselves unspotted from the world. Why do you annex so high a reverence to the sacrament, while those plain and everyday duties come in for no share of your reverence at all? Why do you look upon the sacrament as such a solemn, such an important, such an affecting ordinance, while you let slip the duties of charity, and justice, and plain dealing—duties which are certainly as much insisted upon in the New Tes-

tament, and to which our Saviour annexes as high an importance as to any ordinance of His appointment. I do allow that there is something impressive and affecting in the very nature of a sacrament. It occurs seldom, and this has the effect of giving it great additional solemnity; and, at all events, there is something in the highest degree serious and interesting in seeing a multitude of Christians assembled for the common purpose of expressing penitence for their sins, and gratitude to the Saviour who died for them. But I must think, in addition to all this, that there is another reason which makes Christians more punctual in the observance of the sacrament than the other duties of the Christian life. The sacrament is a duty that can be more easily performed. I do not say that it is easier to perform this duty aright; for in performing it aright you must yield the submission of your hearts to the whole law and obedience of the gospel. But I say that it is easier to perform this duty aright to the eyes of the world, than to maintain the other virtues of the Christian character. It is easier to sit down at the table of the Lord—to maintain an appearance of great reverence and great decency—to handle the symbols of a Redeemer's death—to go through all the established formalities of this ordinance: it is easier even to weep at the affecting remembrance of what He did and what He suffered, and to be powerfully impressed with the solemnity of the occasion—I say it is easier to do and to feel all this than it is to maintain an upright walk and conversation in the world—to maintain integrity in your dealings—to be charitable and humane to your poorer brethren—to be sober and temperate in your conduct—to abstain from theft, and calumny, and injustice—to resist the allurements of selfishness and gain—to measure every step of your ordinary conduct by the commandments of our Saviour—to bring every thought into the captivity of the obedience of His law. Now, why would you do the one while you leave the other undone? Why would you observe the sacrament, and neglect the other duties of the Christian character? Why would you mind the appointed fast, while you neglect the weightier

matters of the law—justice and mercy and faith? The reason, I am afraid, is too plain. You would gladly get off with the easier, while you shrink from the more difficult parts of obedience. You would like to serve your Maker with as little trouble and fatigue as possible; you would like to get to heaven as smoothly as you can, and discharge the burden of religious obligation at the least possible expense. Now is this your gratitude to your Saviour? Is this the high reverence that you feel for Him who suffered and bled for you? Is this the whole amount of those fine professions that you make at His table to love and to honor Him? Yes! you will honor Him while it is easy; you will obey Him when He calls for a light sacrifice. But if it is a heavy commandment—if it is some painful sacrifice that He requires of you—then you would gladly get off. How different from the example of the primitive Christians! They obeyed our Saviour in what was difficult; they resigned every interest for His service; they bade adieu to the world, and to all its joys; they were ready to surrender life in the maintenance of the Christian profession. Let us imitate their example. We have not the same hardships to encounter; we have not the same difficulties to oppose our progress. Let us enter with cheerfulness into all the struggles of the Christian warfare; and as we have discharged the easier part of the law by sitting down at the table of the Lord, let us discharge the more difficult parts of the law by being honest in all our transactions with the world, diligent in the performance of every social duty, humble and condescending to our brethren of mankind, generous to the poor, and maintaining in every situation assigned us by Providence a life and conversation becoming the gospel.

Again, another sentiment which I shall attempt to impress upon your feelings is the vanity of time. It is a sentiment which the recurrence of a yearly ordinance is well calculated to awaken. We live in the land of mortality, and neither rank nor age can escape its ravages. Every year the communion table presents us with a new spectacle.

Some new communicants come forward to offer their first vows, and some old ones have disappeared for ever. Christians who were seen last year to live and to move and to handle the symbols of redeeming mercy, are now moldering in the churchyard. Their friends have wept over them, and the grave-digger has performed for them the last offices. The change is gradual, and fails to impress us; but in a few years the change will be complete. Another people will sit at that table, and another minister will speak to them. We shall be all lying in quietness together, and a new generation of men will tread upon our graves. It appears to us a distant futurity, but the lapse of a few seasons will bring it round. The sun holds his unvaried course in the firmament of heaven; he marks the footsteps of time, and the span of a few revolutions will bring us to our destiny. Man hastens to his end, and in a little time the grave will receive him into its peaceful bosom. In this day of solemnity you should think of the mutability of all things. You should think of that country to which you are fast hastening. You should listen to the voice of wisdom which proclaims the vanity of the world, and tells every man among us that it is not here where the firm footing of his interest lies.

Come, then, commemorate the melancholy changes which are carrying on around us in this scene of weakness and mortality. Where are the men of the generation that is past? They, like ourselves, were eager in the pursuit of this world's phantoms, active in business, intent on the speculations of policy and state, led astray by the glitter of ambition, and devoted to the joys of sense or of sentiment. Where are the men, who a few years ago gave motion and activity to this busy theater? where those husbandmen who lived on the ground that you now occupy? where those laboring poor who dwelt in your houses and villages? where those ministers who preached the lessons of piety and talked of the vanity of this world? where those people who, on the Sabbaths of other times, assembled at the sound of the church-bell, and filled the house in which

you are now sitting? Their habitation is the cold grave—the land of forgetfulness and of silence. Their name is forgotten in the earth, their very children have lost the remembrance of them. The labors of their hands are covered with moss, or destroyed by the injuries of time. And we are the children of these fathers, and heirs to the same awful and stupendous destiny. Ours is one of the many generations who pass in rapid succession through this region of life and of sensibility. The time in which I live is but a small moment of this world's history. When we rise in contemplation to the roll of ages that are past, the momentary being of an individual shrinks into nothing. It is the flight of a shadow; it is a dream of vanity; it is the rapid glance of a meteor; it is a flower which every breath of heaven can wither into decay; it is a tale which as a remembrance vanishes; it is a day which the silence of a long night will darken and overshadow. In a few years our heads will be laid in the cold grave, and the green turf will cover us. The children who come after us will tread upon our graves; they will weep for us a few days; they will talk of us a few months; they will remember us a few years; when our memory shall disappear from the face of the earth, and not a tongue shall be found to recall it. Now, one use to which we should apply the recurrence of a solemn and yearly ordinance is to recall the flight of time, and the rapid disappearance of its vain and perishable glories. There is a blind and melancholy infatuation upon this subject. How perishable is human life; yet no man lays it to heart. Death multiplies around us, and we look on with a wretched indifference. Acquaintances fall every year, and we resist the impressive warnings of mortality. Even under the pressure of age and of infirmity, we turn our eyes from our latter end, and count upon many days of enjoyment. When the people carry a neighbor to his grave, their talk is of this world and of this world's business. And when they see the earth close over him, and take leave of an acquaintance for ever, they recur every man to his own work, and in a few hours it is forgotten.

It strikes me as the most impressive of all sentiments—that it will be all the same a hundred years after this. It is often uttered in the form of a proverb, and with the levity of a mind that is not aware of its importance. A hundred years after this! Good heavens! with what speed and with what certainty will those hundred years come to their termination. This day will draw to a close, and a number of days makes up one revolution of the seasons. Year follows year, and a number of years makes up a century. These little intervals of time accumulate and fill up that mighty space which appears to the fancy so big and so immeasurable. The hundred years will come, and they will see out the wreck of whole generations. Every living thing that now moves on the face of the earth will disappear from it. The infant that now hangs on his mother's bosom will only live in the remembrance of his grandchildren. The scene of life and of intelligence that is now before me will be changed into the dark and loathsome forms of corruption. The people who now hear me, they will cease to be spoken of; their memory will perish from the face of the country; their flesh will be devoured with worms; the dark and creeping things that live in the holes of the earth will feed upon their bodies; their coffins will have moldered away, and their bones be thrown up in the new made grave. And is this the consummation of all things? Is this the final end and issue of man? Is this the upshot of his busy history? Is there nothing beyond time and the grave to alleviate the gloomy picture, to chase away these dismal images? Must we sleep for ever in the dust, and bid an eternal adieu to the light of heaven?

ADDRESS.

Among the last words which our Saviour addressed to His disciples, He said—"If ye love me, keep my commandments." You are now keeping one of His commandments, and you do well. You are sitting at His table; you are approaching Him in that sacrament which He Himself has

instituted; you are making a solemn profession of your faith and your gratitude and your obedience; you are testifying your allegiance to Him who suffered and who died for you; you are keeping up His remembrance in the world, and fulfilling the dying request of the best and the kindest of masters—"Do this in remembrance of me; do this till I come again."

This commandment is not grievous. It is delightful to withdraw from the harassing perplexities of this world, and to rise to a foretaste and anticipation of that eternal feast which is prepared for us in a better. It is delightful in this world of mortality, where friends and acquaintances are fast dropping away from us, to make an intimate approach to the truest of all friends, who never dies, and will never abandon us. On this day, when all nature smiles around us, and an unclouded sunshine reposes on every hill and on every valley, it is delightful to look forward to the still brighter days which the light of prophecy and of revelation has laid before us. This day will soon draw to its termination, and the clouds of evening encompass our dwelling; this delicious season of the year will soon pass away, and the lowering face of winter look black and dreadful upon us; this fair and unclouded weather which gives so much gayety to the light and cheerful imagination, will soon be dissipated, and the rushing of the storm be heard upon our windows. Nature, and all the joys which nature inspires, are deceitful and transitory. The buoyancy which a fine day gives to the animal spirits is but a momentary elevation of the heart. It may soon expire in the deepest melancholy—it lies at the mercy of every fluctuation. By resting upon it you make yourself the creature of time and its never-ending vicissitudes. The way to gain stability to your happiness is to rise from nature to nature's God—from the vanities of time to the unfading splendors of eternity—from the joys of this world to the joys of heaven—from the little play of human passions and interests to the grand business of moral and religious discipline—to the sublime pleasures of faith and of devotion—to that peace which the world

knoweth not, and that elevation of heart which passeth all understanding.

You see how the very words of the institution guide our wandering spirits to that rest and that immortality which we all aspire after—"Do this till I come again." What a delightful anticipation do these words inspire us with. How calculated to reanimate the heart of the believer, and to sustain the weary and dejected spirit when oppressed by the anxieties of the world. He will come again in glory—armed with terror, it is true, against the children of disobedience—but in all the mildness of His tender and indulgent character to the worthy partakers of His sacrament. And when He comes again He will take you to Himself, He will establish you in the everlasting mansions of peace and of righteousness, He will clothe you in the bloom and the vigor of immortality, He will wipe away every tear from your eyes, and bid every anxiety of your bosom be hushed into gentleness.

This is the noble and elevating prospect which Christianity has set before us, and it is a prospect which you may all look forward to. I do not address myself to the worldly—to those who are immersed in the cares of time and think seldom of eternity—to those who are strangers to God, and who, in observing His ordinances, pay Him the mere homage of their external profession, and are carried along by the stream of general example. The people to whom I address myself are those who really wish for immortality—who labor under the most earnest and deep-felt anxieties for their salvation—who are diffident of themselves, and conceive, in the despondency of their spirits, that the comforts of the gospel were not intended for them. What I say is intended to cure the desponding Christian of his hopelessness, and to assure him by the high authority which he reveres, that he is not far from the kingdom of God. He is now under that godly sorrow which worketh repentance unto salvation. He has commenced that career of sentiment which will lead him to heaven; and though grief and uncertainty encompass his outset, he must at last emerge

into the delightful repose and confidence of the Christian faith. It is very true that the promises of Christianity are not addressed to all; but they are addressed to all who labor and are heavy laden. It is very true that there are many exceptions to the grace of God—but these exceptions are only to be found among the careless, the unreflecting, the hardened, those who live in security, and hurry along the stream of infatuation till death comes like a whirlwind upon their blind and unawakened consciences. It is very true that all are not saved—but all who labor and are heavy laden are saved if they come to Christ, for He has promised that He will give them rest.

On this day, then, devoted to the celebration of a Saviour's love, let the desponding Christian find comfort to his soul. Why abandon himself to despair against the express assurances of Scripture? Will he deny the truth of Jesus? will he deny His omnipotence as a Saviour? will he deny the mildness of His character, or give way to the oppression of doubt and of anxiety, when to all who are in his state He addresses, without exception, the language of invitation and encouragement—Come to me, *all ye* who labor and are heavy laden? Why then does he conceive himself to be an exception? Our Saviour makes no exception, and what right has he to apprehend one? It is true you are weak, you are guilty, you are disobedient—the errors of frail and corrupted humanity hang about you perpetually; in every step you offend, and in every thought of your heart you fall short of the purity and elevation of a perfect character. This is your disease, and it is the disease of the whole human race. Every son of Adam is tainted with it; not a brother of the species who has escaped the malignity of sin—all have gone astray, and not a man among us can present to the Father of Spirits the incense of a pure and unspotted offering. You feel as you ought, when you feel the burden of your infirmities, and tremble at the inveteracy of that disease which has made such cruel inroads upon the happiness and virtue of the species. But while your eyes are open to the extent and virulence of the

disease, why should they be shut against the power and efficaciousness of the remedy? Why refuse the call of the physician, or turn a deaf ear to those gracious and consolatory words in which the atonement of the Gospel is revealed to us?—Peace on earth, and good-will to the children of men. O the glory and riches of the love of Christ; it passeth all understanding. Why should you refuse the comfort that is held out by Him, who says in the words of the evangelical prophet Isaiah—"The spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; He hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that He might be glorified."

You approach this mighty Being in the ordinance of His appointment, and you do well. Approach Him in faith. Shake off the melancholy which oppresses you. Approach Him in prayer, and you will be heard. He will lend an attentive ear to the prayer of a broken heart; He will set your feet in a sure place; He will establish you in comfort. The sheltering arm of His love and His omnipotence will defend you. You will walk in gladness through the world, and enter with triumph into the glories of His kingdom.

SERMON IX.

PRAYER.

On this the morning of Thy day we would approach Thee in the peculiar capacity of Christians. We offer ourselves to the Lord of the universe as the disciples of Jesus of Nazareth. We acknowledge Him to be the authentic messenger of Thy will and of Thy promises. We profess Him to be the only true and living way to the glories of Thy paradise; that we can be redeemed only by His blood; that we can be instructed only by His righteousness; that we can be animated and sustained only by His consolations. We profess ourselves to be the followers in the faith of those illustrious men who preached and who propagated the doctrine of Jesus, who held fast their profession amid the terrors of martyrdom, and maintained the sacred intrepidity of conscience amid the cruelties of a persecuting world. How refreshing, O Lord, to the minds of those Christians must have been the ordinances of Thy religion! How sweet to their souls the Sabbath morn, which recalled the triumphs of their Saviour's resurrection! and what a day of holy gratitude and piety when they approached the table of the Lord, and their hearts burned within them at a name and a remembrance that were ever dear to them. They now sleep from the troubles of the world. They have entered into their quiet rest. They sit at the right hand of Thy throne, and shine in all the splendors of righteousness amid the glorified spirits which surround Thee. We humbly desire to imitate their example, and to tread in that path which led the Christians of old to glory and immortality. In this distant age of the Church we desire to do as our fathers have done before us—we desire to keep alive in the world the memory of a crucified Saviour—we desire to transmit to our children the purity of His ordinances—we desire that the dying request which He left behind Him may receive its accomplishment in all ages—Do this in remembrance of me; do this till I come again.

May it be the delight of our minds, O Lord, to share in this affecting solemnity; to approach that feast of love and of gratitude which lies before us; to retire for a moment from this world of care to the feelings and the exercises of piety; and to rise to the anticipation of those joys which Thou hast prepared for us in Thy eternal kingdom.

We live in happier times. The dark ages of violence and of persecution are now over. We can celebrate our sacraments in peace. The noble intrepidity of the Christians of other times has secured for their descendants the quiet establishment of their religion. We thank Thee that we can now repair to the solemn assembly—that there is none to make us afraid—that liberty of conscience is established—that the delightful music of the church-bell is heard in every valley—while a benignant toleration extends its influence over a peaceful and a happy land.

We thank Thee, O God of mercy, that Thou hast not visited us with the trials of more troubled times. But may we never forget that there is still much to prove and to exercise the purity of our principles. May we never forget that Christianity is a warfare; that in every generation of the Church believers have their difficulties to contend with; that the life of a Christian is a life of perpetual vigilance; that while we stay in the world we have to struggle with its vices, with its allurements, with the passions and infirmities of our nature, and with that contempt which fashion and frivolity and false philosophy have often annexed to all that is serious. May we remember, Lord, that the Christians of old had something more than the mere Sabbath or sacrament to exercise their obedience—that their offering to heaven was the incense of a perpetual sacrifice; that every hour of the day the terrors of persecution hung over them; and that they were called upon to maintain the constancy of their professions amid the dangers and difficulties which never ceased to surround them. May we in like manner remember that the duty of a Christian demands something more than the mere sacrifice of a few hours at the place of devotion, or of a few sighs and prayers at the table of the sacrament. May we remember that, like the Christians of old, we have to maintain a perpetual warfare; that we are never to throw aside the armor of faith and of fortitude and of principle; that we are to carry Thy religion about with us as the guide and the ornament of our lives, as our staff to support us amid the distresses of the world, and as our shield against its difficulties and temptations. We pray for Thy blessing on this awful and important solemnity. May it be the instrument of conviction to the guilty; may it be the instrument of repentance to the alarmed; may it be the instrument of faith to the penitent; may it be the instrument to the believer of reformation and perseverance in righteousness. On this day, devoted to the celebration of a Saviour's love, may we think of our unworthiness; how helpless and unable of ourselves; how daring and multiplied our offenses; how forgetful of our duty; how insensible to the awful considerations of death and judgment and eternity.

On this day may the hearts of the penitent be filled with the consolation of Thy promises. May they acknowledge the faith of the gospel as their only remedy and their only rejoicing. May they see in their

remembrance of a dying Saviour that there is a hope for the guilty who reform, and for the most abandoned of characters, if he turn from the evil of his ways. May they shake off the melancholy which oppresses them, and rise to the sublime confidence of the gospel; and may they no longer resist the animating hope of forgiveness when they think of the Son of God divesting Himself of the glories of His nature, descending from heaven, assuming the infirmities of a man, submitting to a life of cruelty and mortification and to a death the most painful and ignominious; and all to impress upon the hearts of the penitent the joyful lesson of pardon and immortality.

On this day may believers gain additional strength to their principles, and renewed vigor to their purposes of obedience. May this act of devotion send them back to the world more prepared for the exercise of its duties. May it be something more than a mere momentary exercise, the effect of which expires with the performance. May it be seen many days hence, and may it yield in abundance the fruits of purity and of righteousness.

As we sit together at the same table, may we live together as children of the same God, as brethren of the same nature, as disciples of the same Saviour. May the hearts of all be improved, and consoled, and exalted. May we think of that eternal feast which Thou hast prepared for us. May every thought be withdrawn from the vanities of a perishable world. May we have our eye heavenward, where brighter days await us—where we shall be purified from the imperfections of time, and be able to present to the Father of Spirits the incense of a holier and more unspotted offering.

PSALM CXXXVII. 1–6.

"By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down; yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion. We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof. For there they that carried us away captive required of us a song; and they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion. How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land? If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy."

Had the Bible come down to us unaccompanied by any pretensions to being inspired, it would have stood high as a literary composition; but the very circumstance of its being the code of our religious faith is against the reputation of its eloquence. The Christian has a higher object in contemplation; and the infidel has too great a disposition to undervalue the whole subject to carry away a fair impression even of its subordinate merits. We are familiar-

ized to the Bible from our infancy. It is the book of our schools, and the reading of it formed the task and discipline of our boyhood. In some cases this may lead us to associate with the Bible a sentiment of reverence, and in other cases a sentiment of disgust. At all events, it must have the effect of modifying in some degree our impression of it. The feelings and recollections of our early years never abandon us. There is an obstinacy about them which never fails to exert a most decided influence upon the taste; and in this way our judgment of the Bible, viewed merely as a specimen of ancient literature, is different from what it would have been had we been released from those peculiar associations which must exist in every Christian country, or had our attention to its merits been the free and spontaneous exercise of our maturer faculties.

Still, however, it is not in the power of any association entirely to obliterate the strong and genuine characters of excellence; nor can I conceive it possible that any mind should be so beset with prejudice as to refuse the testimony of its feelings to the beauty and tenderness of the passage which I have now laid before you. It possesses many of the constituents of the finest poetry—the scenery by the river side—the action of hanging their harps upon the willows in the midst thereof—the sentiment, such as was nearest to every bosom, suggested by the memory of a distant home, and the place where their fathers worshiped—the affecting expression of that sentiment, "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning"—"If I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy." I must say, that in such images and expressions as these, there is a nature, a pathos, and a simplicity which must carry it over all opinion and all prejudice.

There may be an excess in spiritualizing. Christians there are who delight in the exercise of mystic interpretation—who find a hidden meaning in every passage of the Bible—who construe the most distant resemblance into a type and a prophecy, and whose whole exposition of Scripture is made up of fanciful ingenuities. This extravagance

has been carried too far. It is to be lamented by the friends of Christianity. It supplies a topic of ridicule to the enemies of our faith, and it rests the defense or illustration of Christian doctrine on ground which, to say the least of it, is suspicious or vulnerable. The Bible stands in no need of any such commentator. Take it according to its natural and obvious interpretation. Enough for it the direct simplicity of its language and the strength of its unquestionable evidences. You would lose nothing though you were to surrender all the expositions of our mystical and figurative interpreters. In these expositions you often meet with much ingenuity, and what is still better, with much affecting and evangelical piety. But you may give them all up, and yet retain everything that is worth contending for. The great body of undeniable doctrine remains unimpaired. You have all that inspiration has thought fit to reveal to us in clear and authoritative language. We now live under the full revelation of the gospel; and why run in the pursuit of shadows, when the truth stands before us in the plainest and most substantial characters?

The psalm before us has been made to undergo two interpretations. Take it in its obvious sense and direct meaning, and it is the song of Jews laboring under the horrors of the Babylonish captivity, aspiring after their distant home, and swearing to be true and faithful to the remembrance of it. Take it in the remote and secondary meaning which has been ascribed to it, and it may be considered as the song of Christians laboring under the miseries of their earthly pilgrimage, aspiring after that heaven from which sin and corruption had banished them, and swearing never to lose sight of it as their home and their expectation. Now I do not mean to dispute this last interpretation, but I think it would be as well that it were not too much insisted upon. It gives no aid to the doctrine of immortality: that is sufficiently established without the assistance of any refined or mystical interpretation. But it may do mischief. It may give an appearance of weakness to Christianity. It may lead the unthinking to suppose that

the whole body of Christian doctrine is composed of such flimsy materials as the remote and fanciful speculations of mystical commentators. It may give a triumph to infidelity, furnishing it with a fair subject for ridicule, and it may take away from the friends of the gospel all that security and proud confidence of argument to which the honesty of a good cause entitles its defenders.

Let us therefore abandon the idea of any spiritual interpretation, or rather let us offer no opinion upon the subject. The psalm still remains to us as a specimen of most beautiful composition—and what is still better, it may be made as subservient as before to all the feelings and purposes of piety. If any writer shall fasten upon a distant home as the subject of his poetry, it is not necessary to suppose that it is my home or my family that is intended—it is enough for me that the sentiments of that poem are the sentiments of nature and propriety. I make them my own, I transfer them to the resembling situation which I myself occupy; I catch the spirit of the composition, and feel my heart bettered by all the truth and tenderness which abound in it. Now what is true of a human composition is true of the sacred poetry before us. My home may not have been in the writer's contemplation, but no matter, I feel the inspiration of his sentiment, and I apply it to my own circumstances—I enter into his pathos, because I feel myself, though not in the same, yet in a kindred situation. This wilderness of care I call my banishment—my distant home is heaven; and in the contempt and discouragements which religion meets with from the world, I see the triumph and the ridicule of enemies. I do not seek, nor is it of importance, to know if all this were in the mind of the psalmist—enough for me if he touches with sensibility and effect upon his own congenial situation—I feel myself carried along in a train of simultaneous emotions, and resign my heart to the full impression of his imagery and of his sentiments.

With these observations in our mind, let us enter into the exposition of the passage now before us, and endeavor to

apply the feelings and principles of the psalm to the actual condition of Christians.

Ver. 1, 2.—"By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down; yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion. We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof." I am sensible that there are many who do not enter into the feeling that this world is a banishment. The world forms all their home and all their enjoyment. It is the sole theater of their ambition; and in the happiness which they hope to find exclusively there, they never once think of giving a look or a wish beyond it. I am sensible that with almost every human being it is this world and this world's objects which engross the great majority of their time—that its interest forms the grand spring of human activity —that it is for this that we see all things active and in motion through the various departments of business—and that the great purpose of man in all the restlessness and variety of his movements is to secure some warm and well-sheltered tenement on this side of death. This entire devotion of the heart to the anxieties of time is the most obstinate, though the most unreasonable principle of our nature. In vain shall we bring every power of eloquence to bear against it—even the voice of heavenly inspiration has been lifted in vain; and even in spite of the gospel, and the splendor and evidence of its revelations, how few are to be found on the face of the world who live for eternity. But I shall refute, though I cannot conquer it, and have only one argument to offer—the simple argument of the grave. What, I would ask, does it all tend to? It all ends in forgetfulness. As sure as yonder sun maintains his unvaried course in the firmament of heaven, these busy and restless pursuits will terminate in nothing. I may fail to impress you, but it is not your impression which constitutes the truth. Time is the mighty and resistless element upon which I make my calculation—and in all the confidence of this mighty argument, do I prophesy your fall. I have only to look forward to the lapse of a few short years, and I see every Christian who now hears me in his sep-

ulcher. This little time will not put an end to the ambition of the world, but it will put an end to yours. The generation to come will be the imitators of your folly, and human life will still offer to our notice the same spectacle of activity that is soon to be extinguished, and of joys that are on the eve of perishing. But to you the world with all its pleasures and all its greatness will be as if it had never been. It will pass like a fleeting image upon your memory. Eternity will rise before you in all its grandeur and in all its importance; and you will come to acknowledge that it is there, and there alone, where your home and your inheritance lie.

And what are we here but exiles from this home? What is the state of human life but a state of banishment from Heaven, and from the purity of its enjoyments—banishment from that peace of conscience which settles there—banishment from the presence of God and the full contemplation of His attributes—banishment from that perfection of virtue which reigns in paradise, and from the exercise of all those delightful charities on which the dark and angry passions of this world have made so cruel an inroad? This is not our resting-place. Even the men of this world are perpetually tending to repose, but never finding it—at one time racked by the pangs of disappointment, at another carried along the rapid career of a successful ambition—but finding, even in the full possession of the object they strive after, that the joys of this world are tasteless and unsatisfying. The heavenly-minded feel that this is not their resting-place. While they are in the body they labor under the weight of its infirmities. Temptation assails them—fancy plies them with the vanity of its allurements, and their minds wander from the purity and elevation of the gospel. Vexation frets their tempers, and in the violence of irritated feelings, they forget the peace and charity of Christians. In the unguarded hour of company they indulge their vanity or censoriousness, or love of distinction. It is true that a good Christian will struggle to maintain his integrity amid the innumerable difficulties which

surround him. With the joys of the Christian faith he will combine the diligence of the Christian practice. The motto of his life will be—"Though faint, yet pursuing." He will try to make head against the sin which most easily besets him, nor will he ever to the end of his days shrink in indolence or despair from the toils of religious discipline. But still the frailties of his degraded nature hang perpetually about him, and remind him of his fall. He aspires after perfect obedience, and grieves at the distance which separates him from the object of his pious ambition. He feels himself an exile from heaven, and from the purity of its laws. He presses forward to the prize of his high calling, but grieves to find that the passions and interests of the world should so often break in upon the elevation of his purposes. Like the Christians of old, he is perplexed, though not in despair, and he longs to be delivered from this perplexity. He longs for that time when he shall repose from the agitation of guilty fears and guilty passions; when the powers of corruption shall be destroyed in his soul; when his spirit, like the spirits of other just men, shall be made perfect; when conscience shall have nothing to reproach him with, and every faculty within him shall move in harmony to the great laws of truth and order and righteousness.

The Christian who longs for the reign of charity, and tastes it to be gracious, will feel that this is not his resting-place. In this world what cruel obstructions to that perfect love which forms the joy of Paradise; what variance, what emulation, what rivalship among families exist in the bosom of every neighborhood; what deep and revolting insinuations to another's prejudice or another's ridicule; what unchristian pleasure in the low and mischievous work of calumny; what secret repinings at the growing fame and prosperity of an acquaintance; and what triumph in his disgrace or in his fall! But let me not overcharge the picture. We do not say that this is of universal application; but there are many examples of it, and enough to convince us that we are yet very far from those millennial

days when charity shall reign in the world, and form the whole human race into one family of brothers. There is no happiness more truly angelic than that which consists in the feeling and exercise of perfect cordiality betwixt man and his fellow. We are exiles, then, from the happiness of our condition, while we live in a world where this cordiality is far from being perfect—where it is exposed to many interruptions—where the dark and angry passions are perpetually breaking in upon it—and where, setting aside the malignity of the human character, our very ignorance of one another, and want of understanding, are enough to impede the free flow and harmony of friendship. There are some to whose hearts a cold unfriendly look forms the cruelest of all disappointments; who are formed for charity, and feel the exercise of it to be the most pleasurable of all enjoyments. To such as these, this world is a banishment. It is a banishment from that perfect love which reigns in Paradise, and is the delight and exercise of all who live in it; where every eye meets another in the full glance of cordiality and affection; where in every being we meet with we recognize a brother and a friend; and where from the throne of God to the very humblest of His children, all shall rejoice in that charity which never faileth, and which will form the inhabitants of heaven into one great and united family.

The Christian who droops and is dejected under a sense of his infirmities feels that this is not his resting place.—There are some Christians who labor under the convictions of religion, but feel little of its comforts; whose minds are a prey to the most disheartening anxieties; who know that Christianity is a system of mercy, but feel as if they were not included in it; who look only to the discouraging picture of their own guilt and their own insufficiency, and whose eyes are seldom withdrawn from this gloomy contemplation to the bright and cheering spectacle of a triumphant Redeemer speaking peace to the humble and the contrite spirit, and giving the assurances of His mercy to all who trust in Him. While we are still on our pilgrimage,

even the best of Christians must sometimes lay their account with these visitations of melancholy. They form part of our discipline; they remind us of the imperfections of our nature, and of our distance from the full confidence and enjoyment of God; they teach us to aspire after heaven, and to long for that eternal city, where we shall live in the presence of our Father—where with the spirits of just men made perfect we shall encircle His throne—where the hidings of His countenance shall be no longer upon us—and where for the weariness and despondency which now oppresses every family, we shall have our hearts established in the joys of His salvation, and in the accomplishment of His promises. But while we are in the body we must feel the weight of its infirmities—our hearts are apt to fail us in the way—the joys of the Christian faith may at times abandon us—we feel the misgivings of anxiety and despair—we weep when we remember Zion, and contrast the peace and blessedness of its mansions with this sad and weary wilderness. This is a grievous though not an incurable disease. It is the desolation of the mind; it is that sorrow of the heart which refuses at the time to be comforted. But it cannot last; it has its acme and its termination. Brighter days will succeed to it even in this world. Godly sorrow will not utterly consume its victim, or render him for ever unhappy. It will at last land him in many precious consequences; it will work repentance unto salvation; it will speak peace to the spirit of the humble and oppressed penitent; it will translate him into the joys of the Christian faith. He will cast all his care upon Him who is the Redeemer of his soul; he will repose all his anxieties in the bosom of the Eternal; his sincere but imperfect obedience will be the evidence of his renewed principles. The ordinances of religion will be his delight and his refreshment; his heart will be established within him in the full confidence of his God and of his Saviour; he will have a foretaste of heaven; and the dreariness of his banishment will be alleviated by the bright anticipation before him.

Ver. 3, 4—"For there they that carried us away captive

required of us a song; and they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion. How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?" This alludes to the contempt and mockery which the children of Israel had to sustain in the country of their banishment. The Babylonians asked them in derision for one of the songs of Zion. They loaded with ridicule the pure and venerable religion, and aggravated the sufferings of the weary and oppressed exiles by their mirth and their indecency. We are sorry to say that the resemblance still holds betwixt the Jews in a state of captivity and the Christians in the state of their pilgrimage. We have also to sustain the mockery of the profane and the unthinking. Ridicule and disdain are often the fate of sincere piety in this world. Fashion and frivolity and false philosophy have made a formidable combination against us; and the same truth, the same honesty, the same integrity of principle, which in any other cause would be esteemed as manly and respectable, is despised and laughed at when attached to the cause of the gospel and its sublime interests. Some may think that the picture is overcharged—that religion does not incur so much contempt from the world as we are insisting upon—and that the man who lives in the outward profession of Christianity, and in the practice of its different virtues, stands a higher chance for reputation in his neighborhood than the man who tramples upon the institutions of the gospel, and lives in open defiance to its morality. This is all very true; and yet it is also true that a sincere Christian has often much to undergo from the levity and ridicule of the world. The ridicule is not annexed to the social virtues of the gospel—it is annexed to that piety which in the New Testament is made the principle of them. The morality of the gospel (and we say it in its praise) has of itself a strong claim upon the homage and admiration of the human heart—in its humanity the most amiable; in its integrity the most elevated; in its fortitude the most manly; in its deportment the most mild and gentle and condescending. Let a man clothe himself in the different virtues of the New Testament, and he

holds himself out to us in an attitude the most graceful and the most engaging. But be not deceived. I say it is possible to admire these virtues, and yet not to admire Christianity; it is possible to confine your imagination to these genuine effects of the Christian principle, and to turn away in disgust and repugnance from the principle itself. Even though separated altogether from religion as their motive and their principle, these virtues would still remain the objects of admiration in every humanized society. It is not of contempt for the social virtues which spring from religion that I complain. They must ever be acknowledged as the finest, the most graceful accomplishment of the human character. It is of contempt for religion itself; it is of contempt for the religious principle viewed in its abstract and unmingled simplicity. There never can be contempt for the social virtues, whatever negligence may prevail in the exercise of them. But along with the admiration of these virtues, there can be, and to this hour there actually is, a very great and a very general contempt for that principle which forms the best and the only security for their existence. The ridicule is not annexed to the social virtues, but it is annexed to piety—it is annexed to reverence for the authority of God—it is annexed to faith in Christ—and to all those sincere and evangelical principles which if they flourished among men would beautify the face of society, and form the whole human race into one happy and virtuous family.

But why, it may be said, should anything be advanced that can lead to the idea that piety and the social virtues are independent of one another? God forbid that such a fair and natural alliance should ever be dissolved. But it is not Christianity which destroys the connection. It is the infidel who laughs at piety, or the lukewarm believer who dreads to be laughed at for the extravagance to which he carries it. The Christian is not for giving up the social virtues. But the open enemy and the cold friend of the gospel are for giving up piety; and while they garnish all that is right and amiable in humanity with the unsubstantial

praises of their eloquence, they pour contempt on the very principle which forms our best security for the existence of virtue in the world. Let me say nothing that can degrade the social virtues in the estimation of men; but separate them from religion, and what are they? At the very best they are the virtues of this life; their office is to scatter a few fleeting joys over a short and uncertain pilgrimage, and to deck a temporary scene with blessings which are to perish and be forgotten. Make them a part of religion and you exalt them beyond all that poet or moralist can do for them. You give them God for their object, and for their end the grandeur of eternity. No, it is not the Christian who is the enemy of social virtue: it is he who sighs in all the ecstasy of sentiment over it at the very time that he digs away its foundation, and wreaks upon that piety which is its principle the cruelty of his scorn.

Now what I insist upon is, that religion is the actual victim of this scorn—and that as the Jews in their state of captivity had to endure the mockery of their foes, so the Christians in the state of their pilgrimage have to endure a similar trial. I think that in the round of my own familiar experience I have met with the most undeniable evidences of a pretty strong and I am afraid a pretty general contempt for religion. Why is family worship given up during the residence of a visitor? Is it not because you dread the imputation of being puritanical?—and if you really dread the imputation, is this not a proof that it is actually laid upon all who can hold up their face to the exercises of piety? Why does a company fall so readily into a conversation about trade or politics or agriculture, but on the moment that there is the slightest approach to religion, there is an embarrassment visible in every countenance? It is a subject which all shrink from and which all are ashamed of—there is a meanness annexed to it; and though not an individual there who would not lend his fullest testimony to what was respectable in justice or graceful in charity, yet all that is exalted in faith, and piety, and the elevation of a Christian, will be suffered to pass without praise and with-

out acknowledgment. Let a man be humane, and you love him—let him be honest, and you confide in him; but let him be religious, and I do not say that you, but that there are many in the world who would pity or despise him. It is very true that they will allow him a certain degree of respect for his religion; they will grant him a certain degree of indulgence to this peculiarity—but he must take care not to carry it too far. He must not carry it to such a length as would be offensive or outrageous to the feelings of the world. They will allow him to attend church once a day—they will allow him to sit down at the sacrament—they will allow him all that is sanctioned by fashionable example; but the moment that he begins to distinguish himself—the moment that he steps beyond the limit prescribed to him by the omnipotence of custom—the moment that he becomes more punctual, more zealous, more declared in his attachment to religion and its ordinances than his neighbors in the same rank of society—I say from that moment he must prepare himself for the contempt of the world, and feel that he has to stand on the trial of his firmness. Let him do as others, and his religion will be tolerated as decent and inoffensive; but let him do better and more than his neighbors around him, and it is all rant, all enthusiasm, all the weakness of a driveling and unmanly superstition; and the man who has the intrepidity to announce himself as a Christian, and be true to his Saviour and God, is branded as a Methodist—as a man who has transgressed all the rules of moderation and good society—as a man who has in some measure disgraced himself by adhering to an obstinate peculiarity, for which among a great proportion of his fellows he will meet with no sympathy and no admiration.

Ver. 5, 6.—"If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy." These verses express the determination of the Jews in their state of captivity; and let it be your determination in the state of your pilgrimage. Like them you may have to brave the contempt of neigh-

bors; but think of the grandeur of eternity, and tell me, with such an object before you, if this world's contempt is not worth the braving? Live by the powers of a world to come. Think of the littleness of time; think of the greatness of eternity; think of the cloud of witnesses that at this moment encompass you; think of the spirits of just men who have gone before you; think of the angels that are now looking upon you from the high eminences of heaven; think of that kind, that gracious Redeemer who died for your offenses, but now sees you from His seat of glory at the Father's right hand; think of the omniscience of God; and shall all the contempt and discouragement of the world make you falter from that path of duty and perseverance which will conduct you to the Jerusalem above? You sit at the Lord's table, and you do well. May it be a refreshment to you by the way. If your spirits are likely to fail, may this feast of love strengthen and restore them. May it send you back to the world more prepared to resist its temptations—to withstand its contempt and opposition—to discharge its duties—and to improve it as your scene of exercise and preparation. My prayer to heaven is—that your faith may be invigorated, your hearts purified, your gloomy apprehensions dispelled, your prospects brightened, and your joy made full in the strength of the Lord, and in the consolation of His promises.

December 8, 1810.

ADDRESS.

You have now finished the greatest solemnity of our blessed faith, and may it not be an unprofitable solemnity. I trust that the sentiments you feel at the table will never abandon you—that you will carry them with you to the world, and that your religion, instead of being the mere obedience of a day or of a festival, will rise to the Father of Spirits like the incense of a perpetual offering. You are weak, but God can perfect His strength in your weakness;

you are corrupt, but Christianity provides for this corruption; you are guilty, but the grace of God is free to all who return from the evil of their ways, and offer at the throne of heaven their faith and their humility and their repentance. Some are apt to give themselves up to despair because they feel the weight of their own infirmities. But this is no discovery of their own. Christianity supposes them to be beset with infirmity—it proceeds upon this as the basis of that dispensation which the Saviour introduced into the world. It is true that they are weak and guilty; and it is to save them from the despair of this weakness and guilt that Christianity was instituted. In the grace of the gospel there is an ample remedy held out to all who feel themselves in these circumstances. There is the efficacy of Christ's atonement—there is the dying love of a powerful and affectionate Redeemer—there is the voice of His mercy—there is the tenderness of His compassion—there is the graciousness of His invitation, Come to me, all ye who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

It is to commemorate the love of this kind and powerful Redeemer that you have this day joined in the sacrament, and you have done well by commemorating His love. You have made the profession to heaven that you love Him; and I refer you to the Scriptures for the best evidence and testimony that you can give of that love—"If ye love me, keep my commandments." How shall I know, then, that you have partaken worthily? God knows, for He sees your hearts; but I have not that advantage. I cannot penetrate through the disguises of hypocrisy—I cannot unmask the pretensions of insincerity and deceit—I cannot take my secret stand, and with the glance of an all-seeing eye detect the artifice, the dissimulation, the coldness, the hardened insensibility, that lurks in the bosom of an unworthy communicant. I have nothing before me by which I can decide the question—I can only decide upon the outward appearances which come under my observation; and it is impossible that in the short time of a few hours such ap-

pearances can have occurred as would enable me to resolve the question. All that passes before man is a grave, a decent, and an orderly ceremonial. I see seriousness upon almost every countenance. I see an apparent reverence for this affecting solemnity of our holy religion. I see the marks of attention in every eye; and were I entitled to pronounce upon so short an experience, I would say that I see nothing but symptoms the most promising and the most satisfactory. But an important question remains. Is all this to last? Will the good feelings, will the pious purposes, will the holy voice of penitence and amendment be persisted in and called into sustained and habitual exhibition? God alone can answer this at present.

For He alone knows the character of every communicant—He knows the strength or the weakness of your purposes—He knows the sincerity or the falsehood of your pretensions—He knows whether you have made the engagement in that spirit of presumption which will be disappointed, or in that spirit of humility which His good Spirit will cause to prosper and to triumph. For me to say anything with certainty upon this subject I must have a little more experience. I can only judge the soundness of your principles by their effects—I can only judge the sincerity of your repentance by your reformation—I can only judge of the evangelical power of your faith by its yielding in abundance the peaceable fruits of righteousness. When I look abroad at the right season of the year over the face of the country, I see it glowing in all the pride and luxuriance of vegetation—I see the flower in its loveliness—I see the stalk which supports it—I see the leaves and the spreading branches; but the root to me is invisible, nor would I have known that the root was there had it not been for the vegetation which rises from it. When I look abroad upon the human beings of my neighborhood, I see nothing but outward appearances—I hear their words—I see their behavior—I mark their conduct—I listen to their conversation—I observe their actions. The root and the principle of all this is to me invisible. God alone can have

a direct view of it, but I can infer the healthy root from the flourishing vegetation.

Be a Christian then in your behavior, and I will infer that you are a Christian in your principles. Let me see the flourishing vegetation, and I infer a healthy root, and look forward to an abundant harvest; let me see the fruits of righteousness in your conduct, and I infer that there is a root of sound and evangelical principle within you, and I look forward to an abundant recompense of reward. May the solemnity of this day be the means in the hand of Providence of adding to the vigor of this root—may it be watered by the dew of heaven—may it become more steadfast and immovable in your souls—may it be refreshed by the blessing of the Lord, that it may be fitted for bearing such an abundant crop of virtue and righteousness as will redound to His glory and to the honor of His religion in the world. If in the course of my acquaintance with you in after life I see you obedient to the gospel, attentive to its ordinances, holding up your face for its honor and its interests, zealous in promoting it, mindful of its duties, observant of its peace, its love, its candor, its fair dealing, its honesty, I shall then infer, in as far as it is competent for fallen man to do, that the grace of God has operated within you, and settled in your hearts a reign of faith, and charity, and righteousness.

SERMON X.

[During the years 1812, 1813, 1814, 1815, 1816, Dr. Chalmers kept an accurate record of his preaching, from which the following and some subsequent notices are extracted :—

John iv. 10.—Preached at Dairsie, 14th June, 1812. At Kilmany Sacrament, 21st June, 1812. At Edinburgh, Lady Glenorchy's, 19th July, 1812. At Anstruther, 23d August, 1812. At Denbog, 26th July, 1813.]

JOHN IV. 10.

"Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water."

It must occur to every reader of the verse before us, that something more is meant by *living water* than the natural element. There is a sense which lies under it—a thing signified, of which water, the subject of conversation betwixt our Saviour and the woman, was only the sign. And it might appear wonderful that this did not occur to the woman herself—that she did not seem to be aware of any hidden import or signification in the term as used by our Lord; but, conceiving that it was still the true or literal water that He was speaking of, she asked how He could have of this water, as the well was deep, and He had nothing to draw with. The truth is, that though the term *living* is calculated to suggest some high and spiritual acceptation to us, it was not calculated to suggest the same thing to her. The original phrase for living water was applied by the people of those times to water in motion, or running water. It had two senses, and she, as was most natural, took it up in the sense in which it was most commonly understood. But could living water, in this sense, be drawn up from the bottom of a well? Yes, if the spring was of such force as to give velocity and sensible motion to the water, it was still called living water. It is probable that the water of

the well at which Christ and the woman of Samaria were then seated was living water. Certain it is that in the book of Genesis, xxvi. 19, where it is mentioned that Isaac's servants digged in the valley, and found there a well of springing water, it is called living water in the original language, and it is so marked on the margin of our Bibles. In the same manner in the book of Leviticus, xiv. 5, where the priest is ordered to kill a bird over running water, the words employed in the original are the same in signification with those which our Saviour made use of when He talked of living water in the text before us. This explains the circumstance of the woman's still talking of drawing living water, and drawing it out of a well. She was misled by the ambiguity of the term; and this ambiguity threw a deeper disguise over the sublime and spiritual sense of our Saviour to the woman of Samaria than it does to a reader of our common translation.

It were well if it were in the power of a mere critical explanation to throw aside the disguise, and to secure a ready access into the human heart for the spirit and doctrine of our Saviour. But I am afraid that the misapprehension of scriptural truth lies somewhat deeper than in the mere misapprehension of language—and that examples could be named of profound and accomplished grammarians, who have given the strength of their days to the elucidation of the Bible, and yet, both in heart and in conception, were utter strangers to the truth as it is in Jesus. The ignorance charged upon the woman of Samaria is not peculiar to her. It exists among the thousands of every country where Christianity is established, and where the title of Christian is prefixed to the name of every individual. There are multitudes that know not the gift of God, and that know not Him who proclaims and offers it. They know not what the gift is, and they know not how or where to apply for it. The country teems with Bibles and with churches, and yet they maintain a determined ignorance in the midst of all their opportunities—their days on earth unenlightened by the guidance of that heavenly instruction

which is to be found in the Bible—and, when they come to resign their temporal life, utter strangers to the knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ whom He has sent, whom to know is life everlasting.

I count it, my brethren, one of the most striking exhibitions which theology can furnish, that a man may give the strength of his days to the labor of its most difficult and profound investigations, and be, after all, a stranger to what is called in the Bible the spiritual discernment of the truth as it is in Jesus—that after he has done all which earnest attention and solid understanding, and the talent of pouring upon his subject the light of a brilliant and convincing illustration, and every other faculty of his natural constitution can accomplish, he may still be laboring under all the blindness of him into whose mind the light of the glorious gospel of Christ has never yet entered—that the terms of "God," and "judgment," and "salvation," and "grace," may be recognized by him as well-known sounds, and may even be employed by him in such a way as to make out a sound and pertinent and irresistible argument, and yet the import of these terms may not be so perceived by him as to be at all felt or appreciated in such a way as a distinct sense of their meaning would infallibly lead him to do. Oh, it is interesting to observe how, when genius has exhausted all its resources, and that mind which would have carried its possessor to the sublimest attainments of human science has lavished all its exertions on the Bible, the man may still be in a state of positive deadness as to the living meaning and the practical influence of any of its truths; or, in other words, those truths are actually not seen by him. They do not come upon him with the impression of their reality. They may form the elements of many an ingenious speculation, and enter with appropriateness into many a process of reasoning, but by him they are not so believed and not so looked to as to give its prevailing bent to the heart and the life and the affections. He may even be sensible of all this, and wish it to be remedied, and bring his every natural power to the object; and yet he may find

that all, all is unavailing. There is a barrier between him and the saving knowledge of the doctrine of Christ, over which all the energies of the best endowed intellect can not carry him. Nay, he may perceive the most illiterate of his neighbors to have got beyond him, and to look on the field of revelation with such a clear and affecting perception of all its objects as he can not attain to. Such experiences as these are valuable, my brethren. They go to confirm the doctrine of a spiritual illumination. They harmonize with that utterance of our Saviour when He says, "Father, I thank Thee that Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to babes." They put us all, as to the gospel of Christ, on the same footing of dependence—they reduce us to the attitude of little children. Nor do I know a finer exhibition than when a man of gigantic faculties is brought down to this, and knocks for light at a door which he can not open—and feeling that he has done nothing till he obtain such a view of spiritual and unseen matters that believing on them from his heart the fruit may be holiness, he, after discovering the utter incompetency of all native and unaided exertion to obtain for him such a view, is at length reduced to the earnestness and to the humility of prayer.

Let me attempt, in the following discourse, to expose this in its various particulars. Some may, by the blessing of heaven, attend to us with the hearing ear; and the hearing ear may, by the same blessing, be accompanied with the understanding heart. God may achieve the greatest things by the very humblest of His instruments; and I count the greatest and most interesting of all events to be—what is unnoticed by the world, and what the pen of history seldom records but in characters of contempt—that grand transition by which a human soul passes out of darkness into the marvelous light of the gospel. Could this light be only communicated, you would no longer be at a loss to understand the gift that is held out, and the quarter where you were to apply for it. You would ask of Him who has both the will and the ability to give, and He would do to

you what He promises to do to the woman of Samaria—He would give you living water.

First, then, many know not in the general that the blessings and the privileges of the gospel are a gift. Without descending to a more particular explanation at present, this living water includes in it all the blessings and all the privileges of the gospel. The ignorance which I now desire to expose lies in conceiving these blessings and privileges to be not a gift but a claim—not a free and gratuitous exercise of kindness, but the payment of an account—not what you receive as a present, but what you work for and obtain in the shape of well-earned wages. Now this delusion will have its own peculiar effect upon two classes of professing Christians. There is one class who will look at their own performances, and think they have done enough. This will be their confidence, and the rejoicing of their hope, that they have made out their claim. They will not ask of Jesus Christ—for why ask of another to do for them what they conceive they have done for themselves? why request as a present what they think they can demand as their due? or why have recourse to the interposition of another for securing them that which they hope to obtain upon the strength of their own actual obedience? Observe the effect of this confidence. It is unnecessary to demonstrate that this obedience on which they found their security is a most polluted and most unfinished offering, and will not stand examination when tried by the purity and the requisitions of the divine law. There are only two ways in which we can make good a claim to the reward of the law: We must either bring up the obedience to the standard of the law, or we must bring down the standard of the law to the actual state of the obedience. Let us try the first. Let us sum up all the capabilities of our nature; let every power and every energy within be pressed into the service—and to give all fairness to the experiment, let the purest and the noblest individual of our race be invited to the enterprise of bringing up his obedience to the high requisitions of heaven. If the experiment has never been tried, what is this but to

say that the general feeling of human impotency and human helplessness has condemned every individual amongst us to the inactivity of despair? If the experiment has been tried, I beg to know the result of it. Can any man tell me that he has seen the individual who has run the animating course of virtue, and reached its termination with all the triumphs of success upon his forehead? When I speak of virtue, I ask you to feel the mighty import of the term: it is setting the law of God always before you—it is cherishing the love of God as your supreme and reigning affection—and it is making every unfair object of selfishness give way to the love of your neighbor, which flows from the love of God as its likeness and its accompaniment. Have you seen any such? I am not asking about the worse and the better and the best. You will meet with better and worse in the robber's den or in the dungeons of offended justice. I do not deny that there are gradations of character in the world, but this does not say but that the world is a vast receptacle of sinners, and that the best of these sinners is a sinner still.

Conceive therefore that a man should persist in the delusion I am attempting to expose; conceive him to look on heaven as a claim and not as a gift; conceive him to put forth all the energies of his nature, and all the faculties of a most happily endowed constitution to the enterprise of making out this claim. In other words, let him embark himself on a career of firm, resolute, and strenuous obedience, and then will you see the spectacle of a man trying to win a place in Paradise by his works. It is quite evident that this man has brought down upon himself the very principle by which he will be tried in the day of reckoning. He surely has no right to expect any shelter on that day from the Mediatorship of Christ, if on this the day of his probation he has made a deliberate rejection of all the benefits of that Mediatorship. If you put the peculiarities of the gospel away from you, and take up your chance for immortality on another ground, you surely cannot complain if that be the ground on which the examination of you shall be taken

up and carried forward at the time that you stand before the judgment-seat. It is the ground you have chosen here, and as it is your own ground you will be tried upon it there; and if there be any among you, my brethren, hardy enough to think that you can win the prize of immortality by the might and the exercise of such attributes of strength and character as belong to you—then remember that the inquiry on that day will be not whether there is evidence that while you lived in the world you so lived in it as to prove that you accepted of heaven as an offered gift, but whether you so lived in it as to have gained and substantiated a claim to heaven. In the former case you looked to the law, and you compared its demands with your capabilities, and the result of the comparison was such an humbling view of the guilt and insufficiency that covered you, as led you to feel the need of a something else on which your dependence could be laid; and feeling thus you clung to the offered grace of the Saviour, and you kept by it. In the latter case, you also may look to the law, and look at the same time to your own capabilities of obedience, and whether you see the demands of this law in all their rigor and in all their loftiness, I know not; but by the act of holding out against the gift, and attempting to substantiate the claim, you have certainly somehow or other come to the practical conclusion that you can master all its exactions—that you are a match for it and for all its commandments, and you utterly refuse the sentiment of the Apostle when he tells us of what the law cannot do through the weakness of the flesh, even that it cannot exalt the character to a pure and undeviating loyalty. I am not, my brethren, speaking of a case that is imaginary. The delusion to which I am adverting has a very general existence in the world, and carries in its very essence the great principle of legalism. This is a principle natural to the human heart; it is a principle which is ever coming into play throughout the intercourse we hold with each other, and is upheld and fostered by almost all the transactions of civil society. There is not a more familiar feeling than that of the claim which one man has or thinks

he has upon another. I have lent my neighbor a sum of money, and I have a claim upon him for repayment. I have done him an obliging piece of service, and I have a claim upon him for gratitude. I have acquitted myself of all that is asked or expected from me as a member of society, and I have a claim upon it for justice to my reputation and my character. The feeling of such claims—the consciousness of all that worth and merit which entitle you to them—the sense of provocation when they are withheld from you—the clamorous demand for equity, and the passionate outcry of injured sensibilities when that equity is denied—all these may be observed to give a daily and a perpetual exercise to the heart of every man as he moves through the relations whether of domestic or of general society. It is not to be wondered at that a feeling so familiarly and so frequently called forth in the transactions between a man and his fellows should also insinuate itself into the heart and be called forth in the case of transactions that go on between a man and his God. When I look on men with a reference to the question of what kind of conduct I should maintain towards them, the most natural and general feeling about this question is, that I shall give what is due to them, and that I shall look for what is due from them. When I look on God with a reference to the same subject, nothing more natural and I am sure nothing more general than that obstinate principle of legality in virtue of which I transfer the very same sentiment about Him that I have about my fellows in society: I shall give what is due to Him, and I shall look for what is due from Him. With this sentiment many start upon a course of reformation towards God, and I have no objection that they should do so, would they only at the same time make a right computation of the amount of what is due to the Heavenly Lawgiver; would they only look at the breadth of His law; would they only estimate the degree of his rightful ascendency over all the creatures He has formed; would they only, while they assimilate Him to man in the circumstance that a something is due to Him, also distinguish Him from man

by those very essential circumstances in which He differs from them, that He made us and He upholds us, and He has a claim to the subordination of every movement and of every faculty which belongs to us; then I should not despair after letting them understand what the amount of that something due to God was—I should not despair of convincing them how fearfully hazardous it is to remain upon the ground on which they are standing. Now they misjudge the matter altogether if they think that, because equal to the performance of those reciprocal duties which bind and consolidate the system of human society, they are therefore equal to the performance of those duties which bind together the fellowship of peace between God and the creatures who have sprung from Him. I should not despair of carrying their acquiescence in the doctrine that, however well and however reputable they may find themselves in reference to their fellow-sinners around them, they in every one point of obedience fall short of the glory of God, and are accumulating every day upon their heads the guilt of His violated requisitions—that when assembled around the tribunal which is to put upon them the awards of eternity, they will not be tried by such principles as are gathered out of the constitution of human society—they will be tried by those unalterable principles of equity which fixedly and essentially belong to the cause of God on the one hand, and of God's creatures on the other; and that, therefore, unless they are driven out of the legality of their feelings and their contemplations upon this subject, they are in despite of the offered salvation seeking to establish such a righteousness of their own as never, never can avail them; they are pitching at the impracticable aim of keeping upsides with a law which, with all the strenuousness and all the frequency of their performances, they shall never satisfy; they are braving the penalties of a code which in its most leading particulars they are every day breaking—and therefore let them cease to wonder any longer that though they talk of virtue and multiply their performances, and are both aiming at and doing a number of things which wear a semblance and

a character of religion, the preacher of the gospel should still look at them, and, impressed with the danger and insecurity of their condition, should not be satisfied.

I have not yet said whether I thought or not, that those people had adequate conceptions of the law in all the extent and purity which belongs to it. I have no hesitation in saying now that it is an inadequate conception of this which practically lies at the bottom of their delusion. Did they perceive the law in the whole strictness of the obligation it lays upon them—did they think aright of the truth and majesty of Him who imposed it—did they contemplate as they ought the unalterable dignity of His government, and how for all its stability and all its respect it depended on the unfailing obedience of its subjects, or on the due execution of its defied and violated sanctions upon the disobodient—did they carry in their minds a very small fraction indeed of that high impression of God's holiness and justice which actuates the every feeling which works and circulates among the hosts of paradise—then humbled by a sense of their distance and their shortness, and of the mighty gulf that lay between the high requisitions of God and the paltry attainments of the very best of them, would every one of them be convinced of sin, and be convinced of their need of a Saviour along with it.

By the law is the knowledge of sin, says Paul. Without the commandment, or without the right sense of the commandment, I revived; but when the commandment came, a right sense had visited my heart; when I got to know that the law was spiritual, I was led to perceive how holy and how just and how good it was—when the commandment came to me in this light, sin revived, and I died.

I have already observed that there are only two ways in which we can make out a claim to the rewards of the law. The first way is by bringing up the obedience to the standard of the law. This we have already expatiated upon. The second way is by bringing down the law to the standard of the obedience. This, my brethren, we conceive to be really and practically the way in which the legalists of

this world seek to find something like a settlement of peace with their consciences. As I said just now, they do not look at the law in all the spirituality and greatness of its requisitions; they soften the rigor of its exactions—they take up vague and indefinite ideas of the indulgence of God, in order to evade the close pursuit of his purity and his justice—they form a standard for themselves, and it is a standard degraded by the whole distance of an infinity under the standard of that law which was proclaimed by God Himself for the homage and obedience of the world that He had called into existence. It is not the first but the second that is the real and practical way in which the rejectors of the gospel of Christ contrive to find peace to their consciences, and at the same time to retain the system of heaven being a claim they are able to make out, rather than a gift for which they are indebted to a free and unconditional act of liberality on the part of its dispenser; or in other words, instead of attempting to bring up the obedience to the standard of the law of heaven—an attempt which I believe that out of Christ and away from the influence of His doctrine is never made, or at least never persevered in—all the men who look upon heaven as a claim, and are at the same time satisfied with themselves, bring down the standard of the law to the actual state of their obedience.

Now by so doing you bring down the standard of Heaven's law to a sinful obedience; you pull down the everlasting principles which give support and stability to the throne of the Almighty's justice; you make the tribunal of God speak a language which would degrade any court of law or administration in the world. As we can get none to act up to the purity of our requisition, let us bestow our reward on the best we can find. Our dignity and our truth have been most disgracefully trampled upon—let us take the affront, and soften it all over by an act of compromise and connivance—let us smile on the malefactor who has made a mockery of our government. It is true we hate guilt, and we have uttered against it our solemn denunciations, but these denunciations have all been treated with

contempt, and we find it convenient to recall them. We would pass an act of forgiveness, but this will not satisfy the criminals at our bar. They do not supplicate a gift, they challenge a reward; and we, by accommodating to the high tone of their pretensions, must bring down our law to their obedience, and say that we are satisfied. That guilt which we cannot look upon without abhorrence we are called upon to welcome with the language of approbation and flattery, and the high truth and harmony of Heaven must be all given up to the pride and ignorance of those who rank among the humblest of Heaven's offspring. Enough of this, my brethren; it will positively not bear a hearing. Take the gift upon the footing on which it is offered to you. It is not a claim; and if you misconceive the free grace of the gospel, you either acquiesce in a low standard of obedience, or your life becomes one restless and unceasing struggle in pursuit of an object you will never reach: "Not by works of righteousness which we have done; but according to His mercy hath he saved us." View your salvation in this light, and it comes amply within the reach of all, and at the taking of all who will believe in the reality of the offer. View it in any other, and you throw it at an unattainable distance from the strongest and soundest and healthiest of the species. He never will be able to fulfill the conditions of the first covenant by the works of his own righteousness. The terrors of this violated covenant are upon him, and by turning from the unspeakable gift in this the accepted time he aggravates these terrors by the weight of another sentence and another threatening—"How shall he escape if he neglect so great a salvation?"

I call upon you here, my brethren to remark how different in amount of duteous and reverential morality towards God is the feeling of those who look forward to heaven on the footing of the gospel, from the feeling of those who look forward to it on the footing of a presumptuous legalism. The former look to the actual state of their obedience, and the impression it makes upon them is, that this obedience

is not good enough for God—it has not rendered enough of homage to His law—it has not come up to their conceptions of that purity and of that loveliness and of that devotion and of that good will to all around them which form the attributes and the accomplishment of virtue. It is not adequate to their sentiment of what is due to our Maker, or of what is equal to a full measure of righteousness, or of what man ought to be in his heart and in his habits and throughout the whole currency of his life and conversation. To link our prospects of immortality with such an obedience as this, it would be necessary that we should not feel so high a sentiment as we actually entertain of what is due to God. It would be necessary that we should have a grosser and a scantier conception of the measure of righteousness. It would be necessary for us to think that it is quite enough for man to be just as he is, and that we need neither to fear nor to regret though his heart and his habits have not reached a nobler and a steadier elevation. Now, what is this but to say, my brethren, that while the advocates for heaven, as a claim, arrogate to themselves the whole credit and distinction of being the men of morality and good works, and charge the advocates of heaven, as a gift, with a negligent style of sentiment on the subject of duties and of practical righteousness—it is, in fact, a stricter and a purer and a loftier estimate of virtue in all its greatness, and of obedience in all its rigor, which lies at the bottom of the humble acquiescence of the latter in the peculiarities of the gospel. It is just because they think so highly of God and of His right to the lowly subordination of all His creatures, that they despair of ever reaching His rewards on the footing of having followed all the behests, or of having acted up to all the requirements of loyalty. The humility of the Christian faith and a high tone of duteous feeling towards God, so far from being what I know a very large class of cold and moderate Christians conceive them to be—so far from being on terms of contradiction with each other, do, in fact, communicate—the first to the second, and the second back again to the first—a mutual fervency

and intensity. Give me to see the law in all the breadth of its requisitions, and in all the solemnity of its high and unalterable sanctions, and there is nothing more calculated than such a sight to stir up within me the pervading conviction of sin. When the commandment came to Paul sin revived. Give me to be penetrated with this conviction —and nothing more calculated to shake me out of all my presumptuous dependence on heaven as a claim—nothing more calculated to distance me from a pretension so lofty —nothing more calculated to make me pass upon myself, at the tribunal of conscience, a sentence of condemnation, and lead me to look upon every hope that rested on the foundation of merit as blasted and undone. When the commandment came, sin revived, and I died. Give me to feel that out of Christ I am in a state of death, that the wrath of God is ever abiding on me, and that there is nothing to shield my guilty head from the arrows of His righteous indignation—and nothing, my brethren, more fitted to reduce me to the exclamations of despair, or to the anxious inquiries after a place of refuge, or to the earnest attempt of casting about for one who might hide me in some pavilion of safety till these billows shall overpass. "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Give me a man thus devoting himself to the employment of seeking, and if there be any truth in the saying, that they who seek shall find, there is nothing more calculated than this to guide his footsteps to Him who is a refuge from the tempest and a hiding-place from the storm. "O wretched man, who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Now what is it, my brethen, that has carried us forward to this conclusion? What is it that has thus stripped us of all self-dependence, and brought us in holy and grateful acknowledgement to the Saviour? What is it that has thus led us to the foot of the cross, and made us to feel that there, and there alone, do hope and pardon and reconciliation emanate upon a guilty world? Was it that low sense

of morality which is so often imputed to your men of evangelical doctrine and piety that guided our footsteps to such a landing-place? Yes, my brethren, it was a low sense of the actual morality of man that originated the whole of this process; but along with this there was also a high sense of the incumbent morality of man—there was the very feeling which actuated the apostle Paul, and gave direction to the whole line of reasoning by which he was conducted from the doctrine of the spirituality of the law to the doctrine of justification by faith alone. It was setting up a high standard of virtue upon the degraded state of performance which led to this as the result of the masterly and invincible argument that runs through his Epistle to the Romans; and therefore do I repeat it, my brethren, and recommend it to you as a proposition which cannot be enough labored and enough insisted on, that the theology which receives eternal life as a gift, and acceptance with God as an act of gratuitous kindness, and translation into His favor as a matter of free grace, offered to all and at the taking of all through the appointed Mediator—that this theology, so far from being blind to morality, so far from having any obtuseness about the claims of duty and of the law, so far from being devoid of reverence for its authority over man, makes all this to be the starting principle of its faith, and proceeds throughout the whole career of its reasonings on the august character of virtue, and the extent of its immutable obligations.

And this, my brethren, conducts me to another effect of that system which sets up for heaven as a claim to be made out by man. It is not a system of abstract doctrines that I am now combating—it is a practical error by which the consciences of men are deluded into the feeling of peace when there is no peace. I want to convince them how much they aggravate the hatefulness of all their pigmy and superficial obedience by this act of false confidence on their part. Sure I am that they would both feel and understand it if they were placed in the very same predicament in which they place God. Did one of their fellow-men fall

grievously short of his reverence or his justice towards them, would not that bare act be enough of itself to inflict upon their bosoms the feeling of provocation? Now, think how this feeling would be affected if the man who had thus injured you discovered no sense of the wrong he had inflicted—if he carried it towards you with as much tranquillity and unconcern as if he had done for you and towards you all you had any title to expect. If his conduct speak it to be his actual feeling and his sincere opinion that he had treated you just as you deserved, and that there was nothing in some palpable misdoing of which he had been guilty that conferred upon you any right to challenge or to remonstrate with him—think you not that this want of feeling for his misconduct towards you would aggravate your feeling of provocation towards him? Have you no recollection, my brethren, in your past experience within this department of human intercourse, that when a neighbor injures you there is nothing that goes farther to soften the whole impression of it, and to pluck from the injury its sting, than a becoming contrition and an adequate sense of its enormity on his part? and, on the contrary, should there be no such contrition—if the man who has wronged you evinces no feeling of compunction, and utters no acknowledgment of guilt—if he still continues to carry it towards you in a way that bespeaks him to be quite callous and insensible about the evil of his misdoings—is not this, my brethren, the very ingredient which gives its chief bitterness to the whole provocation? You perhaps are willing to be reconciled; you are ready, even as God is with us all, to forgive if he repent. But he feels not that he stands in need of repentance; he thinks not that he is an object for forgiveness; he is not conscious that he has done you an injury, and will persist in his secure and smiling and confident approach after all that you have suffered at his hand. O, my brethren, is not all this fitted to deepen the injury, and to widen the breach, and to make the controversy more irreparable, and to kindle in the heart of the injured man a more festering impression of rancor and discontent than

ever? All this is very plain, and it should just be as plain that when sinners entertain the hope of heaven as a claim, they, by the very act of doing so, aggravate in God's sight the whole of their sinfulness. If they refuse it on the footing of a boon, they carry the insulting sentiment along with them that they have done nothing towards their Maker which stands in need of any forgiveness, or of any atonement. It is clear that with all their talk about virtue, they have at least a very obtuse feeling about the glory and the extent of it; for it is a very humble portion indeed of its attainments which satisfies them.—It is clear that they aggravate excessively all the guilt they have contracted by being so blind as they are, so insensible as they are to the malignity and extent of their guilt; and thus it is, that while the gospel is freely offered to all as a defense against the threatenings of a violated law, the rejection of the gospel imparts to all those violations a greater foulness and enormity than ever, and will muster up against those who add security to sin a more scowling array of terrors than before, and will bring upon them a deeper and a sorer condemnation from the majesty of the offended Lawgiver. How shall they escape if they neglect so great salvation?

But there is another class of professing Christians who labor under the same misconception—that the salvation of the gospel is not a gift, but a claim, but who, unlike the former instead of converting this idea into an argument for false security, convert it into an argument for despair. The former looked at their own performance, and were satisfied—the latter look at their own performance too, and looking at it with a more intelligent and discerning eye, they are not satisfied. There is a lurking sentiment about them that salvation is, somehow or other, the reward of their righteousness—and the conscience, faithful to its office, says that this righteousness they want. This delusion throws a darkening vail over all their anticipations of futurity. They know not the gift of God, and in the face of an offer, held out without any exception or reserve to all who labor and are heavy laden—do they refuse to be comforted, and give

themselves up to all the agitations of religious melancholy. This is a peculiar case, and it often bids defiance to all the management of human wisdom and human experience. An argument sometimes employed for soothing these unhappy agitations is, Why be discouraged ?—you are not so great a sinner as you apprehend yourself to be, and certainly not worse than your neighbors around. To prefer such an argument as this, is to chime in with the very principle which it should be your first object to extirpate. It is not because you are not so great a sinner that I would have you to be comforted ; but it is because Jesus Christ is so great a Saviour : it is not the smallness of the sin, but the greatness of Him who died for it. I would have you to be satisfied, but not with yourself, for this would be to lull you asleep by the administration of a poisoned opiate. I would have you to listen to that loud and widely sounding call—"Look unto me, all ye ends of the earth, and be saved." I would have you to look unto Jesus ; and if truth and friendship have a power to charm you into tranquillity, you have them here. I would never cease to press the salvation of the gospel upon you as a gift ; and as faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God, I would call into action these appointed instruments for producing in the heart of the despairing sinner the faith which accepts the offer, and which holds it fast. I cannot ascend into heaven to bring down Jesus again upon the world, that you may hear the kindness which fell from His lips, and see the countenance most frankly expressive of it ; but I can bring the word which He left behind Him nigh unto you. I can assure you, upon the faith of that word which never lies, that what He was on earth He is still in heaven ; and if in the history of the New Testament He was never found to send a diseased petitioner disappointed away, be assured that when He took up His body to the right hand of the everlasting throne, He took up all His kind and warm and generous sympathies along with Him. I cannot show you Him in person, but I can reveal Him to the eye of your mind as sitting there ; and if you array Him in any other

characters than in those of love and mildness and long-suffering, you do Him an injustice. He no longer speaks in His own person, but He speaks in the person of those to whom He has committed the word of reconciliation; and in the confidence that He will not falsify His own commission, or fall back by a single inch from the terms of it, we stand here as the embassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you, in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. I would have you to know the gift of God. I would have you to look upon it in the simplicity of an offer, on the one hand, and of a joyful and confiding acceptance on the other. When He was on earth great multitudes followed Him, and He healed them. Come to Him with your disease—the disease of a guilty and despairing mind. Do not think that either the will or the power of healing you is wanting. You approach Him in the most peculiar and in the greatest of His capacities, when you approach Him as the physician of souls; and be assured that the voice which He uttered in the hearing of His countrymen is of standing authority and signification to the very latest ages of the world—"Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Yes! if rest is to be found at all, it must be given. It is upon the footing of a gift that I offer it to you. Not that you are worthy to receive the present, but that it is a present worthy of His generosity to bestow. Take it. There is not a single passage in the Bible to exclude you from this act of confidence. Be not afraid—only believe—and according to your faith, so will it be done unto you.

It is remarkable enough, my brethren, that the false peace of him who is satisfied with the measure of his own performances, and the disquietude of him who wastes himself away in the agitations of religious melancholy, should both have one common ingredient. With both of them there is a strong adhering impression in their minds, that in order to deserve heaven they must somehow or other make out their claim to it. The former underrates the expense and the difficulty of making out this claim; and on the strength of

a few peaceable and neighborly accomplishments, will he cherish all the tranquillity of hope, even though his heart be alienated from God, and in every one point of its exactions he not only falls short of, but flies in the direct face of His spiritual law. The latter brings the law to a truer estimate—to a larger view of the extent and spirituality of its requirements, perceives most distinctly the shortness and the unworthiness of which the other is insensible, but sharing with him in the conception that heaven must be prosecuted as a claim, he consumes all his energies, and fritters away all his comfort, and drags out the days of a dark and wearisome existence in an enterprise through which no device of human wisdom and no strength of human exertion will ever successfully carry him. It is not, perhaps, generally adverted to, but it is not the less true, that there remains in the heart of every melancholy inquirer a strong taint and remainder of legalism. What else is it that forms an obstacle to that peace he is so earnestly aspiring after? Why should he feel such an obstinate and immovable discomfort on the subject of his own sins and deficiencies? Why is he continually postponing his confidence in God, and his peaceful fellowship with God, till somehow or other he gets these sins and deficiencies to depart away from him? Wherefore is it that he will not make the transition which the bidding of the Gospel fairly warrants him to make, and in virtue of which he may come to the Saviour at this moment as he is, and enter into acceptance with God through the open door of Christ's Mediatorship; and for the dark and terrible emotions which are now raising a tempest in his inner man, why does he not take hold of the offered forgiveness, and have a rejoicing sense of the favor of heaven —with a mind at rest from all its fears? Why is he not even now in that state of serenity and enjoyment which would arise from a grateful sense of the Redeemer's services, and from the quiet assurance of a firm and confident reconciliation? Why, my brethren, the reason is just because he does not see forgiveness to be an offer—just because he is blind to that most essential character of the Gospel dis-

pensation, that it is all a matter of grace—just because there is a darkening shroud which mantles from the eye of his spirit that benignant feature of Christianity, in virtue of which there beams from it the freest and kindliest expression of good-will to the children of men. I shall at least tell him one thing, that on his present track of mere exertion he never will find his way to that peace after which he is so earnestly aspiring. I want not to discourage his exertion; but I want to let him know that if he ever should come to solid tranquillity of heart about the concerns of his immortality, it will be by that very sight of the Gospel which I am now laboring to set before him; it will be by the acceptance of all its privileges and of all its blessings on the footing of a present; it will be by perceiving that pardon is gratuitously held out to him; and there is no one point of reformation to which he can ever carry himself that will entitle him to cherish the expectation of God's favor on another ground, or to feel any thing else than that it is just the offered pardon which forms all the dependence he can build upon and all the security he can cling to. Why then postpone by a single moment longer the translation of your mind out of this state of darkness into the marvelous light of the Gospel? Why not hearken diligently even now to God's declaration of Himself, as God in Christ reconciling the world, and not imputing to them their trespasses? The simple acceptance of the gift will be the footing at last on which the peace of an established Christianity is to take possession of your hearts, if ever it take possession of them at all. Why, then, at the instant of time in which I am addressing you, keep any longer at a distance from the gift, and hold out any longer so sullenly and so suspiciously against the frank and generous offer of it? Why work for another day separate from Christ when Christ says to you all, Come to me now, and I will lift the burden of despondency away from you—ay, and cause you even to work with a spring and an energy of performance to which you will ever remain a stranger while the heavy load of your present fears and your present discomforts still

continues to oppress you? It is by an act of trust in and willing obedience to such a call as this that the grand transition will be made from the spirit of bondage to the spirit of adoption. You will not, my brethren, be in a state of greater readiness for effecting this transition by persisting in the spirit of bondage for some weeks or months longer from the time at which I am now addressing you. Let it therefore be your business now to look to the Gospel in its character of freeness—to lay hold of it agreeably to the urgency of its own invitations—to keep fast by it as an assurance of good-will, the fulfillment of which is unto all and upon all that believe. Sure I am that could we detach from your bosom that poisonous ingredient of sentiment by which, separately from the Gospel, you look on heaven as a claim, the charm which now binds down your spirit to melancholy as by a spell of resistless operation would instantly be dissipated, and you would close with the offered gift; and just in proportion as you believed the truths of the Bible would you have quietness and joy in the felt possession of it; and from the moment that the ignorance of my text was chased away, and you began to know the gift of God, from that moment would this verse of Scripture have its whole effect and fulfillment upon you—"Acquaint thyself with God, and be at peace."

But, again, the ignorance imputed to the woman of Samaria in the words, "Hadst thou known the gift of God," does not lie merely in the ignorance of it being a gift, but in the ignorance of what the gift is. Before taking up the particular expression into which our Saviour has cast it, let me submit to your attention this undoubted truth, that eternal life is the gift of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Now, it does not occur to me that there is room to complain of ignorance, in as far as the bare and general information of this last-mentioned passage is concerned. It is universally known, that eternal life is the great object which the Gospel proposes to obtain for all its followers. Men may not be aware that this eternal life is *a gift;* but this is a misconception which I have already attempted to

dispose of. They are in general aware, that whether viewed in the light of a gift or a claim, eternal life is the termination and inheritance of all who have an interest in the promises of the better covenant. They may not be so feelingly alive to the greatness of this object as its importance demands. They may carry about with them a very faint and very feeble conception of it. It may be seldom present to their minds, and when it is present the impression of it may be too slender to overpower the domineering influence of the present scene and the present temptation. All this is very general; but as far as my observation goes, the positive ignorance of everlasting happiness in heaven being the final lot of every true Christian, is not general. Men know it, though they do not feel it in sentiment, nor proceed upon it in action and in behavior.

But, it may be said, if a man knows that "Eternal life is the gift of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord"—is not this to know the sum and the substance of Christian doctrine? Is not this a compendious expression, which embraces in its ample grasp all that is important? and after this is fairly fixed in the creed and understanding of a Christian, is there any thing more in the way of teaching or explanation which remains to be done for him? This is a highly curious and a highly interesting question, and if we had time for it, might lead to a lengthened discussion upon a very interesting subject. Let me remark, however, that it seems to be very much the tendency of speculative Christians to run up their religious faith into one sweeping principle, and into one short but ample proposition. This one thing, whatever it is, is made to stand upon the foreground of all their speculations. Whatever be the subject betwixt you, you are exposed to a never-varying recurrence to the favorite maxim. It is very true that there is a subordination in truth, and none so ignorant as not to know that one truth may embrace and carry another along with it. But what I have to complain of is, that this exclusive attention to the one reigning principle of their orthodoxy, instead of taking in the other truths, has the actual effect in their mind of keeping them

out. Their wisdom, unlike that of the scribe who has treasured up things new and old, admits of no number, no variety in its objects. Instead of repairing to the law and the testimony with the docility of children, ready to embrace them in all their variety, and in all their particulars, their great exercise is to subdue them all to their own systematic arrangement, and compel them to a forced subordination to their own riveted and antecedent principle. If this be not calling another man master, and acting upon an authority which is above Christ, and beyond Him, it is something very like it. I hope, before I am done, to make this a little clearer by pointing your attention to one most malignant example of it; but, in the mean time, does it not strike you, that in the whole of this proceeding there is a complexion of thought, and a train of speculations not to be found in the pure and original record—that the Christianity which exists in such a mind is not a fair transcript of the Christianity which exists in the New Testament; and I refer it to the conscience of all such, whether the act of mind by which they appropriate a doctrine and an article be a simple act of submission to the saying of Christ—be a casting down of their own lofty imaginations, and bringing every thought into the captivity of His obedience?

To take up the question then—if "Eternal life being the gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord," formed the whole of God's communication—if, instead of a Bible made up of various particulars, and containing in it things new and old, the whole of the divine message had been comprised in one short note or intimation, by which we were given to understand, that the prolongation of our lives to eternity was granted to us by God through the instrumentality of Christ Jesus—this information, general as it is, if thought enough by God to give, should have been thought enough by us to receive; and on the principle of not being wise above that which is written, it would have been our part thankfully to have acquiesced, and humbly to have restrained our curiosity within the limits assigned to it. But, in point of fact, God has not thought the information

of this single sentence enough for us—He has given us more, and this more is expanded over the broad surface of a voluminous record. This is quite decisive. We should not be wise above that which is written, but we should be wise up to that which is written. We should follow God respectfully through all His revelations, and our faith in Him should be as varied and as particular as His communications to us. We should make ourselves acquainted with all Scripture—for all Scripture is said to be profitable; and if, instead of looking fairly into all its parts, and following it with cheerful submission through all its varieties, we fasten upon one principle, and then give ourselves up to our own speculations and our own analogies, instead of acting the part of the teachable child, who takes his lesson as it is presented to him, we are making the wisdom of man carry it over the wisdom of heaven, and at the very time too, perhaps, that orthodoxy is our watch-word, and purity of doctrine is our boast and our rejoicing.

Now the effect of this observation should but send you to your Bibles, and my prayer to heaven is that these Bibles may become your daily delight and your daily exercise, so as to make you wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. I can not in the compass of one sermon give you a comprehensive view of the whole truth as it is in Jesus; but as to this eternal life which He has purchased for men, there are two capital points of information which I cannot keep back from you. The eternal life which He has purchased for men, you will observe that He has purchased for sinners, and the first capital point which He has secured for them is the pardon of their sins by the merit of His atoning sacrifice. I know that to this very hour the cross of Christ is a stumbling-block, and that with certain habits of speculation, the taste and the prejudice of many are in arms against it. They are willing to receive Christ in the general form of their Mediator—they will acquiesce in the doctrine so far, and feel no repugnance to eternal life as the gift of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord; but the power of the peace-speaking blood they will not understand; and

why, say they, will you step beyond the limits of this passage for the purpose of tacking so offensive an addition to it? For this best of reasons, I answer, that God has been pleased to go beyond the communication of this passage by tacking to it so many more passages which contain this addition. I call upon them to have a care, lest they be serving two masters, and thus be trying to make a compromise betwixt the word of God and their own fancy. I warn them, that to be Christians altogether, they must, if necessary, cut off a right hand or a right eye; and if there be any darling corruption of their own which opposeth itself to the doctrine of the cross, I appeal to their consciences, while I repeat to them the following passages with which I confront it:—"Justified freely by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, whom God has set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood."—"He hath appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself."—"So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many."—"Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree;" and lastly, because we do not wish to detain you, and not because we have arrived at the end of the Scripture testimonies, "Christ hath given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor." I offer no commentary—I confine myself to a simple exhibition of the Bible, and upon the strength of what has been exhibited, I call upon the avowed enemies of the atonement to cast down their lofty imagination.—I come back upon those professing Christians who look upon their own performances, and think they have done enough, and put it to their consciences now whether God thinks so. I ask them to look at that grand and mysterious movement which was made in heaven, when the eternal Son left the bosom of His Father, and a choir of heaven's host sung His advent to this lower world—and for what purpose? To magnify that law which you make so light of, and to make honorable that which you have disgraced and trampled upon. O let me put it to the consciences of those men who, satisfied with their own performances, look forward on the

strength of them to a smooth transition through the valley of death, and an entrance of triumph into the land of immortality. If their performances be enough, what meaneth this mysterious sacrifice? Where the use and where the virtue of the atonement? To what end the agonies of that illustrious sufferer, on whose death the eye of prophecy throughout the whole of her magnificent career, from the first generation of the world down to the closing of the Old Testament, was ever pointed as the prominent object of her contemplations? Think you that all this was for no substantial object in the counsels of heaven? or that the decease which was accomplished at Jerusalem, and of which the simple and touching memorials are so soon to be set evidently before you, carries with it no influence, and brings the accomplishment of no busy and important design along with it? Ah, my brethren, its meaning was to make an end of trangression; and that every one of you, whose life, in spite of all your security, has been one continued course of transgression, might, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, have the remembrance of them all washed away. Its meaning was to bring in an everlasting righteousness, that you, casting off all dependence on your own fancied attainments, might rest the whole of it upon an immovable foundation; and rest assured, that you will never enter with an unfaltering heart into the presence of God; you will never know what it is to have light and comfort in prayer; you will never taste the sweets of the spirit of adoption; you will never be delivered from all the darkening remainders of fear and of suspicion which still chase out from your bosom the light of the reconciled countenance and the joys of the Christian salvation; you will never, in the whole course of your earthly existence, have firm assurance toward God, or be able to talk with Him as one talketh with a friend, till that time cometh when you shall transfer your confidence from yourself to the Saviour who died for you; and brought into peace with God through Him who was offered the just for the unjust, you have His merits to plead with the Lawgiver, and His intercession to shield you from His righteous indignation.

I turn now to those professing Christians who look at their own performances, and are not satisfied with themselves, and call upon them to think of the mighty satisfaction that has been made for them by another. Let them point their eye to the blood of the atoning sacrifice, and in its peace-speaking power they will feel a consolation and a charm which no lame or feeble generality is ever able to impress. I ask them—why persist in this sullen despondency? why keep so intolerably by their fears? why is the charm of a beseeching God and of the mighty expedient that He has set up for the removal and utter extinction of the gulf between Him and His creatures—why is this so obstinately withstood by them? I have tried to cheer you out of this leaden and oppressive melancholy; I have tried to arouse you out of it; I have tried to win you out of it, and if possible to dissolve it by the language of smiling invitation. But I do more—I try to reproach you out of it. This is what the Bible does, and what a minister of the Bible is warranted in doing also. By refusing the comforts of the Christian faith, you make God a liar; you repudiate the testimony that He gives of His Son; you give Him no credit for the kindness that He is so largely and so liberally manifesting in behalf of all who will; you strip the great atonement of its power; you refuse to ascribe glory and honor to that redemption from which you take away all if you take the surenesses of its unfailing promises away from it; you return a cold and unwelcome look to all its invitations; and those words of which it is said that heaven and earth shall pass away ere they pass away, you suffer them to fall upon your ear, and to have as little effect upon you as if they were without truth and without significancy.

I have now come to our Saviour's own specific description of what the gift is. He calls it living water; and to make you understand what this living water is, we have nothing more to do than repeat that verse of John where our Saviour says, "If any man shall believe in me, out of him shall flow rivers of living water; and it is added, "This spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him

should receive; for the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified." Now observe, my brethren, how I connect this second piece of information with the former. Are there some who yield a kind of general acquiescence in the New Testament, without any specific attention of the mind to the doctrine of the New Testament throughout all its verses? There are some who think they believe in the lump, but who prove that there is no reality in the belief by the act of shrinking from the details. There are some of these general Christians to whom there is nothing unpalatable in the wide and summary announcement, that eternal life is somehow or other obtained for us by the instrumentality of Christ Jesus as a mediator; but who feel all the revoltings of the natural enmity when you come to the separate items and the distinct parts of this mediatorship. I may not be speaking to the experience of a single tenth of the people now before me; but it is right for a minister to have his eye upon that whole field of humanity that he is called to cultivate; and I am quite sure that there exists a very numerous class of decent and lukewarm professors of the gospel, who, while they keep by the grand generality of the doctrine of eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord, still mix up along with it a kind of practical system for the attainment of eternal life, which keeps out of view and out of influence entirely any distinct or practical reference to the priesthood of Jesus Christ, or to the great atonement He has made for the sins of those who believe in Him. Now, the way to argue these people out of their meager and superficial Christianity, is just to take the Bible and turn up its pages along with them—to tell them that all their general reverence for the book is nothing but a mockery and a semblance, if they do not open the book and run a simple and unwinking eye over all the matter that is contained in it—to arrest them at every particular passage by which the doctrine of the sacrifice, and of justification through faith in that sacrifice, is made known to us, and stopping the finger on each distinct clause of information, to challenge the belief just because the information is there.

The heaven which Christ purchased for sinners they never can enter until they are made meet for it. This is the second capital point of information which I proposed to come forward with. A sinner to get eternal life must obtain forgiveness through faith in the blood of the atoning sacrifice; and, again, a sinner to get eternal life must obtain purification and holiness through the operation of the Spirit, which is given to them that believe. There are professing Christians who acquiesce in the general doctrine of eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord, and at the same time refuse the first point of information; and, in the same manner, there are professing Christians who acquiesce in the same general doctrine, and do not refuse the first point of information, but who refuse the second. They deny the necessity of personal holiness, and feel not merely a cold indifference, but feel a positive dislike to this undoubted truth, that whom God justifieth them He also sanctifieth. This repugnance to the sound teaching which is according to godliness, breaks out into a thousand displays. It appears in the life. It may be seen in that act of mind by which many a deceiver has been known to couple with the doctrine of Christ's sufficiency, a feeling of security in the commission of sin. Ministers have felt it to their own mortifying experience, when, at the very time that they were standing at the deathbed of a parishioner, and prayer fell like music upon the ear of the dying man, they have detected him in the utterance of falsehood, and have made the galling discovery that theft was practiced in his family with his knowledge and his approbation. To add to the mischievous and unmanageable inveteracy of the error, it has assumed all the shape and appearance of a system—it has put on the semblance of orthodoxy—a set of quirks and distinctions have been made to supersede the broad, urgent, and impressive simplicity of apostolical truth. A teacher cannot come forward with the good works which Paul willed that he should affirm constantly, but there are hearers now-a-day who, instead of listening to take it in, throw themselves into a defensive attitude for the purpose of ward-

ing it off. To conciliate such hearers he must offer a thousand apologies—he must fill up his half-hour with scholastic explanations—practice and duty must be elbowed out altogether, or degraded into perfect insignificance by the narrowness of the corner which they are thrust into; and that precious time is spent in nibbling away at the point and pedantry of artificial divisions, which would have been better employed in alarming the conscience, and urging the broad and impressive warning of the apostle, "Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor adulterers, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God." No, my brethren, all these things must be done away. They were done away in the case of the Christians to whom the apostle addressed himself; and in what manner? "They were washed and sanctified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."

The same principle applies to the second point of information which I brought to bear upon the first. You have no right to attach yourself to one truth to the exclusion of another. You have no right first to derive one principle from the Bible, and then to derive a second from it by dint of your own excogitations. You are to take the second principle as well as the first from the Bible—you are to follow the Bible with respectful footstep through all its details and all its additional communications; and when I offer such obvious passages as the following, I call upon you to be convinced, and to acknowledge them;—"There is therefore now no condemnation to those which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."—"If any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of His."—"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith." If the Bible will not convince, little can be done by a mere human interpreter; and nothing remains but to deplore the delusion which I cannot rectify—to pity and to pray for it.

The very expedient by which I attempted to school the general Christian into a distinct and pointed recognition of

the atonement, I employ for the purpose of schooling the partial Christian into a recognition equally distinct and equally pointed of the doctrine of the Spirit. It all resolves itself into a belief of the law and of the testimony, and not such a belief as will rest in the bare acquiescence that the testimony is true, but such a belief as will urge on its possessor to an actual examination of the testimony—such a belief as will close with all the parts of the testimony—such a belief as will appropriate every distinct communication as it passes in review before the eye of a mind earnestly bent on becoming wise unto salvation through the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament—such a belief as a little child exercises when it follows by its convictions all the separate parts of the narrative which its parent sets before it. The belief follows, not because this second thing that is told me blends in one harmonious analogy with the first thing that was told me, but the belief embraces both the things, just because both the things are told me in the written and venerable record.

Take this along with you, my brethren, and you will perceive at once how the doctrine of free grace is delivered in the Bible—how the doctrine of heaven being a gift, and pardon being a gift, and all the privileges of Christianity being so many gifts—you will perceive at once how these statements may be defended on the one hand from the abuses of a corrupting Antinomianism, and how on the other they may be defended from the reproaches of those who say of the evangelical doctrine, that it gives up all the securities of practical righteousness. There is not one of these doctrines which does not rest for all its credibility and all its title to acceptance on the announcement of God. And should God be pleased to add to them another announcement, it takes its station among the former with all the firm footing of an equal and a co-ordinate authority. The living water is a gift, and it is a never-failing accompaniment of all the other gifts; and if it be wanting, then every one of them is wanting. Without holiness no man shall see God Without the Spirit, we are none of Christ's. The Spirit is

called the earnest of our inheritance; and if we obtain not the earnest on this side of time, we shall not obtain the inheritance on the other side of time. Ah, my brethren, be assured that He who opens the portal of the mind for a welcome admission of the tidings of pardon and acceptance, does not close it upon the truth which ever follows in their train that we shall never reach heaven, unless by sanctification we are made meet for heaven. This is borne in, as it were, upon a Christian mind with as resistless an energy, and stamped upon it with as indelible an impression, and proceeded on with as firm and habitual a conviction of its truth as any other communication of God's word that you choose to condescend upon. That truth, the faith of which gives me peace and joy, is just believed as far and no farther than that truth, the faith of which impresses upon me the necessity of a new walk and an upright conversation, and which sets me on the track of endeavor and inquiry how to obtain them, and which guides me to the affecting conclusion that without Christ I can do nothing, and which revives my departing courage by the assurance that with Christ I can do all things, and which urges me on to renew my prayers at the throne of grace, and which leads me to use the strength I acquire through prayer by putting it to trial, and which joins in one close and inseparable combination the habit of exertion with the habit of dependence, and which at length establishes me in the very attitude of the Apostle, who strove mightily, according to the grace of God working in him mightily.

I come back upon the class of professing Christians who look at their own performances, and think they do enough. I ask them if, in the obedience they yield, they look habitually to that mighty Agent who has been sent forth from heaven as the Restorer and Sanctifier of a degenerate world? Do they act on the strength of the promised assistance? Do they watch for the Spirit with all perseverance? Paul did so; and he, so far from thinking that he had already attained, or was already perfect, forgot the things which were behind, and reached forth unto those

things which were before, pressing toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.—I come back upon the class of professing Christians who look to themselves and are not satisfied. It is right for them not to be satisfied with their performances; but it is not right in the face of a promise sealed by the blood of Christ—in the face of a settled provision announced to you as forming part of His redemption—it is not right, I say, in the face of such encouragements to despair. The provision to which I allude is the Spirit to help your infirmities. It is not refused to those who ask it. It will be given you by Him who hath given you His own Son as the pledge and the assurance that with Him He will freely give you all things. "It is shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour." I announce it as a gift, and in so doing I strip a pretended orthodoxy of all its plans of resistance to that doctrine which is according to godliness; I explain this godliness in all its parts; I preserve this sanctification in all its branches; I descend to all the minuteness and variety of the Apostolical teaching; I carry forward Christianity to the shop and the family and the market; I apply it to your hearts and your homes and your business. This may, to the taste of some, give too secular and too working an air to the divine life. For their satisfaction I am not furnished with two mouths—I can not say two things at the same instant—I cannot, within the compass of one breathing, tell both the duty and the source from which you desire the ability to thus change it. Yet both must be told, and if they stand in different verses, or even in different chapters of the same Bible, should not you judge with candor and hear with indulgence, though they are made to stand in different paragraphs of the same sermon, or different sermons of the same minister?

This brings me to another part of my text. I have been hitherto employed in attempting to prove that the privilege annexed to Christianity is a gift, and in explaining what the gift is, I hasten to a close, and offer little in the way of expansion upon a clause so obvious in itself as—"Hadst

thou known who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldst have asked of Him, and He would have given thee." It is delightful to think that these gracious words which fell from the mouth of our Saviour, and contain an assurance so pregnant with satisfaction and hope to all who believe in Him, have an emphasis in themselves which need no human illustration to help them. It is delightful to think that this knowledge which the woman of Samaria was in want of is open and accessible to all of you. I shall convey to you that knowledge in a single sentence—Christ is willing and He is able to help you. To Him all power has been committed both in heaven and in earth. Without Him you can do nothing; but with Him you have a Being who, subduing all the powers of darkness which oppose you in this lower world, and commanding all the influences of heaven to rest upon you, can enable you to do all things. Had she known, she would have asked—or, in other words, we do not ask because we do not know. With what a charm and what an emphasis ought this to fall upon the heart of the melancholy Christian. He is here told, upon the highest of all authorities—upon the authority of our Saviour Himself—that the despair in which he indulges is founded upon ignorance of Him. He knows not how ready—he knows not how able—he knows not how free—he knows not how perfectly willing—nay, how eager and how delighted his Saviour is to receive all who come unto Him—to listen to their complaints—to heal their diseases—to supply their every want, and administer to every necessity. This is the true and the faithful representation of Christ. Could I give you a real and a living impression of Him—could I fix in your hearts the image of Him such as He is—could I bring Him before you, offering and inviting, nay, beseeching you to be reconciled—could all this be done—(and I pray that this work of faith may be wrought in you with power)—then the melancholy which oppresses your heart and keeps it dark would be dissolved in an instant—the gospel would come to you not in word only, but in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance—

and the object for which Paul labored with the Galatians would be accomplished in you. Christ would be formed in you, and He would be made unto you of God, wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.

Before concluding, let me give you an explanation of the term living water, in the largest and most comprehensive sense which belongs to it. There can be nothing more firmly depended on than interpretation of Holy Writ upon the subject—and there we are expressly told that it signifies the Spirit of God given to all them who believe. Now, by the way in which I have split down the subject into particulars, you may conceive that this Spirit is not given at the very outset of a man's Christianity—that on the strength of his own understanding, and by the movements of his own conscience, he travels in independent progress toward the point at which the Holy Ghost is ready to enter him—that there must be a previous conviction of sin, and a previous knowledge of the Saviour, and a previous faith in Him, and that then upon men in this state of preparation the living water is poured, and holiness unto everlasting life is the blessed effect of its salutary application. Now it is not to be denied that at distinct steps of the career of a believer there are distinct supplies of grace and of spiritual enlargement conferred upon him—that he stands on higher vantage ground for obtaining what he seeks when he can do it with a strong faith in the appointed Mediator—and that when this faith is at the strongest, the Holy Ghost is ready to meet it with His largest and most powerful operation. But, my brethren, you are not to suppose that this answer of His to the believer's prayer is the very commencement of His influences upon the soul. The truth is that He presides over the whole progress of sentiment and conviction by which the mind is possessed by the principle of faith, and the mouth is conducted to the prayer of faith. He convinces of sin—He communicates knowledge through the medium of the Bible. He gives movement and direction to the very first step in the process of conversion, as well as to all the successive steps of the process. He was present with His

constraining energy at the time when conscience laid its check upon the sinner—at the time when his heart smote him for his misdoings—at the time when a serious conviction of the need of repentance visited the inner chamber of his thoughts—at the time when a sense of guilt and of danger began to urge upon him the necessity of flying from the frowning destiny that was before him—at the time when anticipation filled his bosom with her darkest and most appalling images—at the time when the voice within would not let him alone, and the terror of the Lord, like an arrow sticking fast, kept by him throughout all his movements, and pursued him with an agonizing sense of a present guilt and of a coming danger—at the time when his Saviour's name fell upon his ear and arrested his attention, and he turned his languid eye upon some obscure dawning of the Sun of righteousness—at the time when the clouds passed away and the soul emerged from all its perplexities, and the free offer of acceptance came with assurance upon his feelings, and the persuading power and kindness of the Saviour charmed the darkness and the tempest away from him, and behold it was a calm—at the time when the firm determination entered his bosom to live to Him who thus had translated him from death to life, and the holy purpose was carried forward to accomplishment, and the prayer for a larger supply of the Spirit of all grace ascended on the wings of an invigorated faith, and brought down upon his tranquilized heart an abundant shower of the influences of heaven.

SERMON XI.

[This sermon was preached at Dairsie Sacrament on June 13, 1813. At Kilmany Sacrament, June 20, 1813. At Balmerino, August 2, 1813. At Monimail, September 19, 1813. At Cupar, June 4, 1815. At Kirkintulloch, August 7, 1815. In the Tron Church, Glasgow, June 9, 1816.]

PHILIPPIANS IV. 13.

"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."

In the prosecution of the following discourse, I shall first point your attention to the extent of duty, or to the multitude of particulars which enter into the "all things" of the apostle. In the second place, I shall prove to you in how many of these things we offend. And in the third place, I shall attempt to rouse you from the dangerous conclusion, that because this disobedience is so much the condition of frail and corrupt humanity, it must just be acquiesced in—a conclusion which I must do my uttermost to resist, because I see in the example before me that there is a revealed instrument for aiding the frailties and subduing the corruptions of our nature—even the strength imparted by Christ—an instrument so powerful, that in virtue of its operation Paul was enabled to do all things—"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."

I. Duty, though simple in its principles, is manifold in its applications. There is not one thing which it is the duty of man to do, that could not be traced to a clear and immediate dependence upon the first and the greatest commandment—the love of God; and the second, which is the love of our neighbor, takes in a very wide range of human obedience.

Each distinct application of the law may be called a distinct duty, and there are writers who have bewildered

us among the divisions and the subdivisions of human virtue. They have laid hold of the general principle, and made it to travel the extensive round of society along with them. They have applied it to a multitude of cases, and brought forward a lengthened catalogue of observances for the regulation of human life. Now, it is very true that to a certain extent our Lord and His apostles did the same thing. They did not satisfy themselves with announcing the general principles of duty—they have in many instances given us the case and the application; but they have by no means exhausted this part of the subject. They have left a thousand possibilities in the circumstances of man unnoticed, and the only way in which they have provided for them is by bequeathing the general rule, and leaving it to man himself to make the applications. Love, says Paul, is the fulfilling of the law. He had before enumerated a few of the applications. Under the influence of this principle, a man will not commit adultery—he will not kill, he will not steal, he will not bear false witness, he will not covet; but, fully aware that he had not exhausted all the applications, he ended his enumeration, satisfied with leaving his disciples in full possession of the general principle, by declaring that if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

It must be obvious to you, that were I to attempt an enumeration of the "all things" which belong to obedience, it would be long, and very long, before I could accomplish it. Love to God involves in it obedience to all His requirements. Love to man is only one of those requirements, and yet it involves in its mighty train the doing of all that is just or useful to our brethren of the species. The duties which spring from these copious principles of human conduct are like the host which no man can number. They meet us at every footstep of our history—they press upon us in every direction—they accompany us in every relation of life—they demand every fragment of our time—they move along the whole line of our existence. Nor is there

a single minute in which they leave the heart of man to the arbitrary independence of its movements—"Whatsoever you do, do to the glory of God," is a commandment which there is no escaping from. It does not leave us to ourselves for a single instant. It tells us that there is no conceivable situation in human life in which God has not a law and a duty for us—nor a single case in all the wide diversity of human affairs to which this question is not applicable, "What is the will of God in the matter before me?"

You may be well convinced, then, of the multitude of the "all things" which it is your duty to do, though I do not bring forward a catalogue of all the varieties. Let the love of God be the constant principle, and obedience to God the constant expression of it, and there cannot a day roll over your heads without carrying a number of virtuous performances along with it. There must be a constant surrender of self to the interests of those around you—there must be a breathing after usefulness—there must be integrity for the performance of what is just—there must be civility for the performance of what is agreeable—there must be an hourly self-denial in the work of doing to others what you would be done by; and such is the wideness of this obligation, that a single human being can scarcely come within your reach but you must feel a call to the exercise. For the master to do that which is just and equal to his servant; for the servant to be faithful to his work while the eye of his employer is removed from him; for the parent to maintain a constant purity of example in the sight of his children; for the member of a company to carry it with kindness and humility, and to give up his own will and his own way to the gratification of those around him; and what, perhaps, is a higher achievement than any, for the member of a family to keep down the irksomeness of his feeling, and suffer not a murmur or a frown to break in upon the peacefulness of his domestic society: these are only a few out of the many; and yet they demand a vigilance which must never be remitted; a tone and a habit of exertion which must never be relaxed; a strictness of prin-

ciple which, if suffered to abate for a single instant, may throw you open to the inroads of temptation, and lead you to deplore in sorrow and in shame the impotency of all your purposes.

From the visible conduct let me carry you inward to the chambers of the mind, and lay before you the mighty work of obedience that should be going on there. Are the supreme regards of your heart fastened upon God? Is His authority felt as the master principle to which all the movements of the inner man observe a subordination? Do you feel His friendship to be enough for you? and does His assurance that all shall work together for good keep your spirit at rest from the anxieties of the world? He has sent you a written message, have you brought every thought of your heart to the captivity of its obedience? Do you submit to it in faith, and is the love of Christ, the author and the finisher of our faith, felt in its constraining influence upon you? Is conformity to His image the main object of your ambition? and in devotion to the Father—in love to every brother of the species—in the patient endurance of wrongs—in meekness and gentleness and kindness are you aiming at a fair and faithful resemblance to the pattern laid before you in the gospel, struggling not only to walk as He walked, but to have the same mind in you that was also in Christ Jesus?

II. These are so many of the "all things;" and I have put them into the form of questions that your conscience, stimulated to an answer, may go along with me in the second head of discourse; and sure I am, that every honest and enlightened conscience will spare me the burden of a proof when I assert, that in many, and in very many, of these things we offend. In some of these things, indeed, there may be an outward conformity, though the great principle of duty—the will of God—has no influence whatever. A sense of honor may give integrity to your conduct; the fear of disgrace may preserve you from all that is counted shameful in society; an instinctive feeling of

generosity may lead you to occasional acts of beneficence; the mechanical influence of habit may perpetuate and insure your attendance upon the ordinances of religion; your admiration of what is tasteful and decorous in the human character may lead you to display in your own much of all that is amiable and engaging; but all this might have been done though there had been neither a God above you nor an eternity before you; and certain it is, that all this has been done where there was no feeling of the one and no anticipation of the other. How can these be appealed to as proofs of obedience, when one and all of them may be performed while the grand principle of obedience is asleep; while the authority of the Judge is unfelt, and the fear of the judgment seat has no operation? Viewed in reference to the Lawgiver, they are in fact so many acts of indifference; nor can they be sustained as offerings to Him, when in the doing of them He was never thought of, and the obligation of His law was never adverted to. Yet, upon this deceitful foundation many an infatuated soul rests its security; and many who pass in society as its delight and its ornament, who are hailed as the favorites of every company, and distinguished by the greetings of the market-place—who, by the unblemished propriety of their manners, have their rank assigned to them among the good men of the world, will, in that day when judgment is laid to the line, and righteousness to the plummet, be found to have lived without God, and having neglected His obedience in time, to have lost His favor and His friendship through eternity.

"Whosoever," says the Apostle James, "shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." There is nothing to surprise or to startle us in this assertion, if we only advert to the singleness of that principle on which all obedience is suspended—Respect to the authority of God. It is no evidence of respect whatever, if you just do what you would have done though He had interposed with no authority upon the subject. He hath said, "Thou shall not kill;" but if your own instinctive horror at the

atrocity of a murder would have preserved you from the breaking of this commandment, I cannot say that in this one example of outward conformity I have yet detected the essential principles of obedience. He hath said, "Thou shalt not be angry at thy brother without a cause;" but if the constitutional mildness of your own temper keep you from this transgression, I have not yet seen any decisive proof of respect to the authority of the Lawgiver. He hath said, "Thou shalt not steal;" but if a sentiment of honor, aided by the sufficiency of your own circumstances, keep you from an offense so mean and so disgraceful, for anything I know, the heart, in reference to God, may still be in a state of the most entire wickedness, and as utterly devoid of submission to Him as if He did not exist, or as if His will had never been proclaimed to us. I travel the whole round of human duty, and I may see a thousand examples of outward conformity which are decisive of nothing, because to do what you would have done at any rate, can never be put to the account of religious principle. Give me a case where the thing commanded is at war with the mighty elements of taste and passion and interest, and then I will fasten my attention upon it. The experiment will be a fair one; and if I find that in every instance the authority of God carries it over the rebellious inclinations of the heart, then I will be found to acknowledge that the first and the greatest commandment is kept in all its extent and in all its entireness. But who does not see even in one single instance to the contrary, that the great principle of obedience is trampled upon, God is deposed from His supremacy, something else has been more loved than He, and the homage which He exacts, not of a part of the heart but of all the heart, has been withheld from Him? Many things may be appealed to; but if all things are not done, then the Lawgiver is dethroned; and as surely as one act of forgery or murder brings down the vengeance of the civil law upon the man who was blameless and unoffending to the very moment of his transgression, so surely will many whom the world smiles upon, and who pass among

the men of the world as the most pure and amiable of the species, when brought under the tribunal of that mighty Being "with whom we have to do," have those points laid open which will flash upon their consciences the conviction of guilt, and entail upon their deluded souls an entire and everlasting condemnation.

Give me a man under the influence of an honest desire after conformity to the love of God, and there will be no willful reservations in the obedience of such a man. There may be imperfection in the whole of his obedience, but this imperfection does not proceed from any deliberate exception of this one or that other of the divine commandments. There is within him the working of an entire principle—in virtue of which he is in good earnest after the doing of all the commandments. He may come short in all and in every one of them, but in none of these shortcomings has he committed that in which, according to the Apostle John, is the sin unto death. He honestly grieves at his shortcomings —he honestly confesses them, and obtains an interest in that justice and faithfulness of God which stand pledged to forgive him his sins, and to cleanse him from all his unrighteousness. But there is not one particular of this unrighteousness which he does not most sincerely desire to obtain deliverence from, which he does not strive with all his power to make head against, which he does not feel a longing of the heart, that through Christ strengthening him he may prevail against, which he does not make the object of his watchfulness and his exertions and his prayers; and be assured that there is not an honest and aspiring Christian among you who will not, in virtue of this general desire to be released from all sin, and to shake himself loose from the service of every other master but Christ, and to do all things in His name, and to the glory of His father who is in heaven—there is not one of you who will not by the use of the gospel expedients of faith and dependence on the Spirit make constant progress not merely in one or in any given number of reformations, but constant progress in all reformation, and be perpetually tending to the high eminency

of standing perfect and complete in the whole will of God.

Now let me just suppose that instead of this general and honest desire after all obedience there is one single exception in which the man gives willful and deliberate way to his own passion or his own interest or his own vanity, and that with the striving after these other points of conformity there is one point in which he acts the part of a determined and presumptuous offender. Even he who honestly aspired after obedience in all points fell into sin; but as I said just now, such sin as was perpetually decaying in its power and ascendency over him—such sin as found its forgiveness in the blood of Christ through prayer—such sin as might occasionally break forth into that warfare between the flesh and the spirit which takes place in the bosom of every believer—but such sin as is ever waning away into a feeble and more expiring remainder, and which at length, utterly extinguished, will present the man who has fought this good fight, and has kept the faith, and has finished his course—will present him holy and unblamable and unreprovable before God. But this, my brethren, will never, never be the result in the case of him who, with the consent of his will, makes one habitual exception to the great maxim of entire and universal obedience. The flaw which corrupt nature introduces into the obedience of the man who is making head against all corruption is one thing—the flaw in the obedience of him who willfully gives way to any one form of corruption is another. The former flaw is ever getting fainter, and will at length disappear—the latter flaw carries in it all the virulence, and brings down upon it all the condemnation of the sin unto death. What is the reason why a sinner of the latter description yields an obedience in other things, and refuses his obedience in this one thing? The doing of the other things falls in with his taste and constitution and circumstances. It lays him under no heavy or painful sacrifice. He may be constitutionally of a gentle and peaceful disposition, and he transgresses not the precept of not being soon angry. He may have a positive aver-

sion to the use of intoxicating liquors, and you may never be able to detect him in the transgression of the precept—"Be not drunk with the drunken." He may have a high sentiment of natural integrity hidden within him, and in turning defiance to every one temptation of dishonesty he may yield a conformity to the maxim of doing as he would be done by. But give me one case, and I will ask no more, where the authority of God comes into collision with a something that his heart is set upon—a something to which he is driven with the whole violence of his desires—a something which he knows to be against the will of God; when in the face of that knowledge he acts the willful and deliberate transgressor, then, I say, that all his other obedience is no such proof of his regard to the authority of God as his disobedience in this one thing is a proof of his utter disregard to that authority—I say that this disobedience demonstrates that there is festering within him a great and a radical principle of rebellion against the authority of his rightful Lawgiver—that the visible conformities, though most correctly and punctually done, are not done unto God; they are done from some other cause than the right principle of submission to Him, because when this principle was brought to its fair trial—when called out to combat it with the urgency of a besetting temptation, it was found wanting; and being a habitual offender in this one point, he is guilty of all, because he evinces within him such a preference of his own desire to God's will, as gives all its provocation to sin, all its deformity to disobedience.

To think otherwise, my brethren, would be doing less justice to God than you do to an earthly legislator. Those unhappy men who lie under sentence of death have become amenable to that sentence upon one specific act of disobedience to the laws of their country.* They have not been guilty of murder, and it is to be hoped that they had still

* This paragraph, and the two immediately succeeding ones, were added to the original sermon written in Kilmany, when it was preached in Glasgow. At the time of its delivery in the Tron Church, two men were lying under sentence of death for theft.

enough of instinctive horror at such an atrocity as to have recoiled from this deed of violence. They have not been guilty of forgery, and I know not whether it was the want of opportunity, or the fear of detection, or some remainder of dislike to such an outrageous violation of truth, that kept them from this transgression. The one crime of which they have been guilty is theft, and for this one crime they are liable to as fearful an execution as if there lay upon them the guilt of innumerable violations. This one crime is completely decisive of the general defect in the moral constitution that belongs to them—it is completely decisive of their wanting the principle of allegiance to the civil authority. Had this principle been within them, they would not have stolen, and the single act of stealing demonstrates their utter want of this principle. And in the same manner with the principle of allegiance to the authority of God within you, this principle would struggle against all that was contrary to the will of God. It might be long, and very long, before it carried you the length of a sinless conformity to the whole of His commandments, but sure I am that not one of the commandments would be willfully and habitually trampled upon; and give me a man who has set up the fear of God in his heart, and I shall see that man walking the whole round of visible obedience, contesting it against sin in all its forms and in all its modes, and struggling, honestly struggling to yield himself to every one of the requirements, and to conform himself to the whole will of God.

I trust that what I have said may serve to undeceive the consciences of those who are building the hope of a future security on a partial obedience—who are cherishing some allowed reservation—who are prosecuting some unhallowed walk of indulgence which they have not yet had the fortitude to abandon—who think that they will eke out for themselves a place in heaven, because along with some suffered habit of licentiousness they have integrity, or they have good-nature, or they have a feeling heart, or they do an occasional act of generosity, or they are attentive to parents, or they take a share in the ordinances of religion. This is

one very important application of the above principle; but there is one other which I cannot forbear, as it touches on a subject to which I from time to time have occasionally referred, and which if ever I take it up in a separate and systematic form will, I am sure, require the deliberate exertion of a good many weeks ere I unfold it in all its bearings, or do justice to the vast importance which belongs to it. If these principles be true, how fearful is the extent of destruction that is brought upon the human race by the rude, careless, unfeeling, and unreflecting way in which the young of a great city are introduced into the vices of dissipation! They may only be initiated into one act of disobedience, and along with this they may retain youthful sincerity, youthful tenderness of heart, all the impulses of a youthful generosity, and all the repugnance of a high and honorable indignation at what is sordid and avaricious, or mean and paltry in the concealments of dishonesty. And yet, my brethren, be this as it may, they by their one act of disobedience have thrown the gauntlet of defiance to the authority of God—they have entered on that course which goeth down to the chambers of death. They have dispossessed from their hearts the principle of allegiance to the Lawgiver who speaketh to them from heaven; they do that for the sake of which the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience; they have indeed made a woeful transition, and yet wretched to think, it is a transition made by thousands every year—it is a transition which parents sleep over—a transition which is connived at and smiled upon by general society—a transition to which the helpless young are cheered and encouraged by their hardier and more profligate acquaintances—a transition traveled by so fearful a majority of human souls, that a Christian parent shudders as much at the thought of committing his children to the walks of business as he would do at committing them to all the dangers of a fearful and unknown wilderness. Oh, my brethren, this is an extremely painful contemplation, and I should like to be relieved from it—and the way of rearing around me a spectacle on which the moral eye might rest

with more complacency than it ever can do on this dark scene of ruined principle that is on every side of me, would be for parents to stir themselves to a little more vigilance than they have ever yet exercised, and for the masters of populous establishments to take upon themselves some responsibility in the way of advice and of guardianship, and for private individuals among you to betake yourselves to the angelic office of doing all that in you lies to aid the struggles of human virtue when like to be overborne by the tide of ridicule and of example, and for all of you who have a desire for reformation to cherish a more intrepid and declared spirit upon the subject than you have ever yet done, so as to make determined head against the tyranny of custom, and to keep yourselves and others out of the way of every temptation, and to shun every assembly of the light and the scornful, and manfully to resist all that is corrupting in the conformities of fashion and of the world, and to take your own independent way, and spread the sanction of your example over others who do the same when you break off from every combination, and refuse every meeting, and retire from every society, where, in the spirit of a wild and convivial licentiousness, all the decencies of life are exploded, and all the delicacies of a yet unvitiated youth are subjected to a most barbarous and unfeeling violation.

This is but a rapid sketch of that work of extensive mischief that week after week is gaining proselytes to the kingdom of Satan, and making them tenfold more the children of hell than before. At present I shall prosecute it no further, and shall conclude with one sentence to a class of hearers over whom I could pour all the tenderness of a mind that would do anything to perpetuate the bloom of their innocence here and preserve them entire for the pure joys of a happy eternity hereafter. Are you hesitating under the influence of vicious and corrupting exposure?—Then know that the question is not, Shall I do this wicked thing, and retaining all the other virtues of my character, just put myself in a less likely situation for heaven than before? Un-

derstand the principle I have been laboring to impress about the whole magnitude of the ruin that a deliberate habit of transgression against one point and particular of the divine law brings along with it; and then you will perceive that the question will be, Shall I do this wicked thing, and put the whole happiness of my eternity away from me? Feel the whole interest of your imperishable being to be involved in the step on which you are hesitating. Bring the whole extent of your religious principles to bear upon the question, and know, most assuredly know, that however much the vices of dissipation may be tolerated and connived at by society at large, it is true of every one of these vices, as it is true of every other, that a willful indulgence is a gulf between you and God, and a barrier in the way of your salvation. May every call you have heard to immediate repentance lend its impression to your hearts. Think of the progressive tyranny of habit; think of the progressive hardening of the mind against all moral and religious considerations; think that the voice of conscience decays and at last dies out into a final departure away from you; think of the Spirit of God grieved by your every act of resistance; and do, my young friends, choose the better part, and let every manly principle of high and honorable resolution be summoned up to the exercise; and when sinners entice, consent not, and defy all their ridicule, and spurn all their allurements, and be alarmed not merely at vice, but at every one step which facilitates and prepares for it; and be assured that the more singular you make yourself, the more formidable the combination of censure and contempt you raise up against you—and the more unsupported by the example and countenance of others, if it be in the good cause of obedience, you throw a higher moral sublimity over the whole of your intrepid and respectable career; and the noble consistency of your doings will in time win from every acquaintance you have the fullness of admiration, and you may at length become the honored instrument in the hand of God of breaking up the combinations of iniquity, and throwing the shield of a commanding example

over the young who may come after you in your warehouses and in your offices of employment.

To "do all things" is the only effectual test of obedience. I go round with this test among the various classes and characters of men, and I see a woeful deficiency on every side of me. I first go to them to whom the preaching of the cross is foolishness, and who, resting on the humble standard of their own virtues, put away from them the offered atonement of the gospel. Hard but important task to bring these people under the humbling conviction of sin, and through the flimsy disguise of mere civil accomplishment, to give them a view of the heart in all its wickedness and deformity! I would say that it consisted in a total alienation of the heart from God. They, indeed, who are far off from God, are made nigh only by the blood of Christ; and it is not to be wondered at, therefore, that those who despise its cleansing and its peace-speaking power should put God so far, and so very far away from them. He is not in all their thoughts; and when they bring their deceitful assemblage of virtues before me, I ask of their love to Him, without whom virtue is nothing better than the fiction of a name. I ask them if His authority be deeply felt and faithfully proceeded upon—if His ordinances be their delight, and if His Bible be their directory—if His approbation be enough for them, when the approbation of men is withdrawn; and without pressing them too hard upon the truth of their pretensions that they do justly and love mercy, I leave it to their consciences to tell, whether they walk humbly with their God?

I go to another set, to whom the preaching of the cross is not foolishness; who name the name of the Saviour and love His sacraments; whose thoughts are more upon God, and whose eye and whose prayers are often lifted to the place where His honor dwelleth. To them I apply the test of "doing all things;" and I count it the most grievous offense which the honor of Christianity has to sustain, that some of its ostentatious disciples confine their piety to the Sabbath and to the ordinances, and banish God from the

week-day employment of ordinary business. Whence that disgusting censoriousness which spreads the tincture of gall over so many a religious conversation? Whence that low tone of honesty and truth, which among the humbler ranks of society is so often found to accompany the uniform appearance, and I believe too the occasional reality, of zeal in matters of religion? Whence, in fact, that separation of religious from social duty we so often meet with, not merely in their conception, but in their example and practice? Whence the feeling, that when a minister lectures you upon fidelity to masters, upon civility and good neighborhood to those around you, upon the payment of your debts, upon the making up of your differences, upon the thousand duties which meet you every hour, and urge you at every step in the progress of your history, to something agreeable to the will of God and the example of the Saviour —whence, I say, the feeling which exists among you that all this is very odd and very unsuitable to the pulpit, and particularly so at a time when every heart should be turned to the love of Christ, and every eye should be melting over the appointed memorial of His atonement? Alas! against them, too, we can prefer the charge of not "doing all things," and we can substantiate it. With the mark of godliness upon their forehead, their conduct for the great majority of their time says, "We will not have God to rule over us." He is only their occasional God. The easy offering of their prayers in the family, or of their attendance in the church and at the table, is ever in readiness. But the living sacrifice of the whole body, soul, and spirit, is withheld from Him. He is deposed from his right and sovereignty over every minute of their existence; and instead of His law reaching to all their concerns, and bringing the whole man under its obedience, we see that in the vast majority of their doings they cast Him off, and are as much the slaves of their own temper, and inclination, and interest, as if God had not a will for them at all times to obey, and as if Christ had never set an example before them to study and to imitate.

Hold, ye hypocrites! who talk of this as the season that is given to the love of Christ, and to the memorial of His atonement! Did not Christ order away a disciple from His altar?—and upon what errand? Upon what you, it seems, would call the very worldly and unsuitable employment of making up a quarrel with a neighbor. Did not Christ say, "If ye love me, keep my commandments?" and yet the minister who expounds these commandments, and presses their observance upon you, is looked upon as preaching another gospel than what He left behind Him. Oh! when will men cease to put asunder what God hath joined; and, taking their lesson from the Bible as little children, submit to it without a murmur in all its parts and in all its varieties?

But let the minister of God be gentle with all men, and humble under the feeling of his own infirmities. Let him, however zealous for the truth as it is in Jesus, learn that there is nothing in the purity of his own practice to justify a tone of indignant superiority to others. It is easy to see and to approve that which is excellent; but how shall he compass the doing of it? It is easy to expatiate on the frailties and the delusions of men; but how shall he manage for himself, when told by his own melancholy experience that he shares in them? It is easy to acknowledge the right and the sovereignty of God in all things, and to press his earnest assurances upon you, that you are wrong, if you suffer not the word of exhortation urging you to the daily walk and duties of the Christian; but to what refuge can he fly, when he finds that he himself is a defaulter, and that after having warmed his heart at the inconsistency of others, and penned his sentences against it, he mingles in the business of his work and his family, and forgetting that the eye of his God follows him there, falls a helpless victim to the imbecilities of our ruined nature?

I make it a common question with you, my brethren, "What shall we do to be saved from this sore calamity?" Did not Christ come to do something more than blot out the sentence of sin from the book of judgment? Did not He come to extirpate the influence of sin from the believ-

er's heart? And unless we make war against it in every quarter, and aspire to a conformity with the will of God in all things, how, in the name of truth and of Scripture, can the salvation of Christ be taking effect upon us?

III. This leads me to the third head of discourse—Sin is not to be acquiesced in. You are not to say, "Corruption is so much the lot of humanity, that we must just be doing with it." This, I fear, is often said in the heart, and often proceeded upon in the conduct. Every new sin as it is contracted is regularly laid over upon Christ. It perhaps furnishes a new topic of humility; but then another opportunity comes round, and the sin is again indulged in without a struggle. The answer which Paul gave to the question, "Shall we sin then that grace may abound?" was a prompt and decisive one—"God forbid!" But the answer which these people give in practice is, that it is all very fair. The use which they make of Christ's redemption is to make Him the minister of sin; and willful transgression, on the one hand, with some unmeaning parade of repentance on the other, makes up the wretched history of many a deluded man, whose obedience is nothing more than a round of positive observances, and whose orthodoxy is nothing more than a speculation and a name.

Oh! when shall we make you understand, my brethren, that the salvation of the gospel is salvation from the power of sin as well as from its punishment; and that the grace of God which bringeth that salvation, not only carries in it forgiveness to all the ungodliness and worldly lusts we have been guilty of in time past, but teaches us to deny them in time future, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present evil world? Do not confine the mercy of God to the mere exercise of forgiveness; acknowledge and go along with it in all its varied exercises. And we read that the very way in which that mercy hath saved us is by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost. You may rest assured that unless the fruit of the Holy Ghost be seen in the newness of your lives, and un-

less the deeds of the old man, being done away, shall give place to the regenerate and the new creature in Christ Jesus, you have no part nor lot in the matter—you, as yet, form no part of God's workmanship or God's husbandry—you have none of that union with Christ which the fruitful branch has with the vine—you may name the name of Christ, but, spiritually and substantially speaking, you are not united with Him. All who are so united, not only name His name, but they depart from iniquity, and prove by their new obedience to Christ in all things, that the way of salvation is that high way which shall be called the way of holiness.

The whole explanation of the matter is to be found in Christ. He who is revealed as our Righteousness and Redemption is our Sanctification also. He who is titled our Saviour is also titled our Sanctifier. He to whom all power is committed both in heaven and in earth, can make a portion of that power to rest upon us. He who knoweth what is in man can, out of the gifts which He hath purchased by His obedience, make a right and a suitable application of them to man—can give wisdom where before there was ignorance and folly—can give strength where before there was weakness—can give love where before there was hatred and alienation—can give charity where before there was selfishness—can give forbearance where before there was malice and revenge—in a word, can give you to receive out of His fullness, and for the grace of His own pure and perfect example, can give you the same, so as to make you walk even as He walked, and to change you into His image from one degree of excellence to another, even by the Spirit of the Lord.

Thus shall I judge of your worthy participation in this sacrament. It is a new approach to Christ; and if it be something more than the mere bodily exercise which profiteth little—if it be an approach to Him in faith as well as in appearance, then the effects of such an approach to the Saviour will be a closer union with Him; and as surely as the root sends up support and nourishment to the branch-

es, so surely will the fruit of union to the Saviour be a firmer adherence to His law, and a purer obedience to Him in all things. The Spirit, which is at His giving, is shed forth on all who believe. Faithful is He who has promised it, and He also will do it. The same believing dependence on Christ by which you obtain His body to bear the burden of your offenses, and His blood to wash away the guilt of them, will also obtain for you His Spirit to dwell in your hearts, to cleanse you from all unrighteousness, to strengthen them with all might, and to fill them with that love of Christ which will constrain to all obedience.

Go not to think, my brethren, that this is some high, mystical doctrine, admitting of no application to the life and the circumstances of men. Can anything be more easy to understand than the conduct of Paul when beset with a sore temptation? Did he give way to it, under the overpowering sense of human weakness? No! he made use of the revealed expedient for making head against the temptation. That expedient was prayer; and the promise made to a believing prayer was realized upon him: he besought the Lord, and the grace of the Lord was made sufficient for him, and his strength was made perfect in weakness. Why, my brethren, will you affect to misunderstand me when I say, "Go, and do thou likewise?" When you rise from that table, and go to your homes and to your business, why may you not carry the imitation of the apostle along with you? At all times and in all places may it not be the prayer of your heart—"Support me, O God, in the matter that is now before me?" When you are in the midst of your family, and might be doing good to them by your conversation or example, may it not be the prayer of your heart—"O God, direct me in this?" When you are going to make a bargain, and a convenient falsehood may bring you in a little more of the meat that perisheth—"O God, preserve me from this temptation?" When you are going to have a reckoning with the neighbor who has imposed, or the servant who has disobeyed you—"O God,

give me to rebuke with the meekness of wisdom ; and if he repents, enable me to forgive him, even as Thou for Christ's sake hast forgiven me ?" When invited to a feast—"O God, may I watch every opportunity of ministering that which may be to the use of edifying, and may I refrain my tongue from speaking evil ?" When working for your master in the field—"O God, enable me to serve him as diligently as if his eye were upon me, and may I serve him from the heart, as unto the Lord ?" When working for your mistress in the family—"O God, keep me from purloining that which is not my own, and by showing all good fidelity, may I adorn the doctrine of our Saviour in all things ?" This would be to fulfill the injunction of the apostle, to "pray without ceasing ;" this would be to watch for the Spirit with all perseverance ; this would be to do all things to the glory of God in the name of Jesus ; this would be to make something more of the sacraments than a mockery and a farce ;—and I call upon you, my brethren, to prove that, in receiving these elements, you have received Christ ; for if you have received Him in truth you will receive Him in love, and if you have received Him in love, you will yield to Him in obedience.

SERMON XII.

[Preached at Cupar on a Sacramental Fast, 30th June, 1813. In the College Chapel, Glasgow, 14th April, 1816.]

ROMANS III. 10.

"As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one."

The term beauty was originally restricted to objects of sight. We talked of a beautiful flower, a beautiful tree, a beautiful landscape. The word was appropriated to something external. The charm which constituted beauty resided in some visible object on which the eye loved to repose, and from which it took in an impression agreeable to the taste and to the fancy. In process of time, however, the term in question obtained a more extensive signification. It was transferred not merely to objects of hearing, but to what was purely moral and intellectual; and we speak in a manner perfectly intelligible to all when we expatiate on the beauty of a sentiment, or even the beauty of a doctrine and the beauty of a speculation.

In this way, when we propose to gain the acquiescence of others in a particular doctrine, there are two distinct circumstances to be attended to—the degree of its beauty by which we can recommend it to the taste, or the degree of its evidence by which we can recommend it to the understanding. There can only be one opinion on the question, which of these two claims should have the precedency. It is the boast of the philosopher, that Truth is the idol whom he worships, and that he will follow wherever the light of evidence shall carry him, though it should land him in conclusions the most nauseous and the most unpalatable. A system may have elegance and simplicity to recommend

it, and be decked in all the ornaments which the eloquence of it supporters can throw around it; but if a single flaw be found in its evidence, it from that moment becomes the philosopher's scorn; it is his glory to own no authority but Truth, and he throws aside the beautiful speculation as fit only for the amusement of childhood.

Now if this be the attribute of a good philosopher, why should it not be the attribute of a good divine? All that we plead for is the paramount and exclusive authority of evidence, and that the power of evidence upon the judgment shall at all times carry it over the power of beauty upon the taste. All that we demand—and in the demand we see nothing but fairness and modesty—is that a doctrine in theology be tried upon the same principles as a doctrine in science—that the question shall be not what is the most alluring by its beauty, but what is the most convincing by its proofs.

In the prosecution, therefore, of the following discourse, I shall endeavor to lay before you the evidence that we have for the doctrine of the text. That evidence resolves itself into two kinds—the evidence of Scripture, and the evidence of direct observation.

I shall be very short on the evidence which Scripture affords for the doctrine of the text. The text itself is perfectly decisive. It is not in the power of illustration to make it more explicit; and though it had stood unsupported and alone, it carries home the universal corruption of man with an evidence and an authority which it is not in the power of sophistry to resist or to explain away. We forbear bringing forward any more quotations—not because we are at a loss to find them, but because of the multiplicity of passages which offer themselves—because it would be difficult within the limits of a sermon to exhibit even so much as an abridged view of the testimonies to the depravity of man which lie scattered over almost every page of the Bible. Without making so much as a single reference to particular passages, I would ask any man, upon his fair and honest perusal of the New Testament, to tell me what

he conceives to be the general purpose of Christ's coming into the world? Did not He come into the world upon a ministry of reconciliation? and does not this imply that before that ministry was accomplished the world was at variance with God? Is not His gospel offered to all men as a remedy? and does not the very conception of a remedy imply the previous existence of a disease? It is not enough to say that He came to remedy our ignorance by instruction. This is true; but did He not also come as a propitiation? and does not the very term propitiation imply the existence of sin? Could I see any traces of a distinction made by the gospel in the terms which it offered to different individuals, then I might understand that it did not proceed upon the corruption of man as a constant and universal fact in the history of the species. But when I find that all are addressed in the same language—when I see no exceptions provided for in the charge given to the apostles to preach repentance and the remission of sins—when I see that one and all of us are called upon to embrace the gospel on precisely the same terms with the most abandoned of sinners—when I see that to become Christians every man of us must have the same faith and the same baptism, which is the symbol of purification from guilt—what am I to infer but that the gospel views all of us as in the same circumstances, as laboring under the malignity of the same disease, and in the same direful state of alienation from heaven, from which it is the kind office of a generous Saviour to redeem and to restore us? If any man says that he is not included in the doctrine of the text, and that he forms an exception to its universality, then Christ may be his teacher, He may be his example, but He is no longer what the Bible represents Him—his Saviour; and that endearing title which forms all the joy of my life and all the hope of my immortality, is little better in reference to him than the mockery of a name; Christianity considered as a scheme of recovery for sinners is frittered into nothing, and the words grace and atonement and propitiation, which force themselves upon the eye in almost every col-

umn of the New Testament, are so many empty sounds, without import and without significancy. To support the doctrine of my text I do not need to refer to the authority of particular passages—I refer to the essential character of the New Dispensation, the grand object of which is to seek and to save that which is lost; and when I am told that there is no other name given under heaven by which man can be saved but the name of Jesus, what am I to understand but that all must obtain the shelter and the patronage of that name before they can secure their admittance into heaven? If there is a man among us who can stand upon the perfection of his own character, then I say of him that he is independent of that patronage; that he can be saved by another name than the name of Jesus; that he can approach the throne of the Almighty in the name of his own righteousness, and can appeal for his passport to heaven to the purity which has guided him, and to the virtue which has adorned him. It strikes me that the whole of Christianity proceeds upon the inability of man to make this appeal—that what he cannot do for Himself a kind Saviour has undertaken to do for him; that He announces Himself the Saviour of all who trust in Him, because all stand in need of His interposition; and that it is not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy that He hath saved us. To disown the principle of the text, then, appears to me to be equivalent to an entire subversion of Christianity. It would be cutting away the ground upon which the whole fabric is supported; it would destroy it as a scheme of reconciliation proposed to all, because needed by all. It might remain a beautiful system of morals, which poetry might deck with images, and eloquence expatiate on with visionary rapture, but all the life which gave substance and animation to its morality would be withdrawn. Though the doctrine of corruption were abandoned as a general principle, the consciousness and the despair of guilt would still continue to haunt the bosom of every individual; there would be no principle to urge him to exertion, because the experience of every one would

tell him that this exertion was unavailing—the splendid virtues of the gospel would only serve to remind him of his errors, and to multiply upon his head the terrors of its violated authority; the unexpiated sentence of guilt would still hang over him; and if conscience discharged its part with faithful severity, he would soon feel the system of morals in the New Testament to be so perfect and so beautiful, that, without the stimulus of gospel motives and gospel principles, it were vain to contemplate and hopeless to aspire after it.

This is all the argument for the corruption of man which I shall urge at present on the ground of Scriptural authority. But I take the opportunity of stating, what I hold to be an undeniable principle, that the authority of the Bible is not only completely decisive on this subject, but paramount to every other. I hold it to be not only impious but unphilosophical to go about with an attempt to mold and conform an authoritative doctrine of the Bible either by the arguments of human reasoning, or by the illustrations of human fancy. This, you will observe, is no impeachment upon the supremacy of reason. Let reason be employed in pronouncing upon the claims of Christianity to be a religion from heaven, and in proving that the Bible is not a fabrication of impostors, but the authentic record of inspired truth; let it be further employed in ascertaining, upon the approved principles of criticism, the sense of its original language, and in bringing forward a correct representation of that sense to the illiterate; but after these are accomplished, it is the part of reason to resign her office, for if she advance a single inch further she steps beyond her province; and we appeal to any man who has made a philosophical survey of the human faculties, if there be not as much falsehood and error in pronouncing with certainty upon what reason is incompetent to judge of, as in shrinking from the office of examination with the safe and certain materials of judgment before you. It is the part of reason, amid the clashing pretensions of the various systems which are proposed to it, to seek for the genuine record of the

divine will; but it is also the part of reason to listen exclusively to the voice of inspiration after she has found it; and I am not renouncing the authority of my judging principle but following its dictates, when, after the Bible is established as the directory of my faith, I offer to it the unconditional surrender of my understanding, and submit my mind as a blank surface to whatever the Almighty, by His word and by His doctrine, chooses to engrave upon it.

The doctrine of the text forms to a certain extent an exception to the above observations. When the article of faith is without the range of human experience, then there is nothing for it but an unreserved submission of the mind. Such subjects as the dignity of our Saviour's person—the existence of higher orders of beings—the agency of evil spirits in the affairs of the world—the counsels of heaven—the efficacy of the atoning sacrifice in bringing guilty man to favor and to immortality—the influences of the Spirit—these, and many others, stand beyond the limits of unassisted observation, and on them the revelation of God must therefore be received not merely as the supreme but as the only authority. But we meet with other assertions in the Bible which come within the familiar experience of human beings, and which can therefore be tried by that experience. A very simple example of this is when our Saviour says to his countrymen—"When ye see a cloud rise out of the west, straightway ye say there cometh a shower, and so it is; and when ye see the south wind blow, ye say that it will be heat, and it cometh to pass." Our Saviour here tells what prognostics were made in the country of Judea, and what kind of weather usually followed them. The truth of this assertion comes within the testimony of the senses. If confirmed by that testimony, it just happens in the way that the evidence of His truth and of His divinity would lead us to anticipate; but if contradicted by that testimony, it would have the effect of unsettling our faith—it would stand an impeachment upon His authority as a messenger from heaven, and we might feel ourselves justified in withdrawing our confidence from a teacher who affirmed to be true

what we know to be false by an independent channel of evidence. The doctrine of the text is a higher example of the same kind. By asserting the corruption of man, it asserts a fact which comes within the cognizance of the human faculties, and the reality of which may be tried by a direct appeal to the evidence of consciousness. We have the law of God written in our hearts, and we have that law written in a more perfect and explicit manner upon the well-authenticated record of inspiration. The question simply is,—Do we come up to the purity of that law? And it is a question which falls within the legitimate boundaries of human experience. I therefore pass on from the evidence of Scripture to the evidence of human observation, and I do it for the sake of those who have a greater respect for the latter authority than for the former. On the principle of being all things to all men that we may gain some, it is the part of the Christian teacher to withhold no argument which may be effectual in gaining the concurrence of those to whom he addresses himself. The corruption of human nature is perhaps the most offensive doctrine of Christianity to the tasteful admirers of fine sentiment and beautiful morality. They may not be ashamed if their orthodoxy is impeached, but they may be made perhaps to take the alarm if their philosophy is questioned; and if we can once bring the evidence of observation to support us, it may compel their acknowledgment at a time when the authority of Scripture would be found ineffectual. A man may carry in his speculations an indifference to the Bible, and yet sustain his reputation in the cultivated and literary orders; but no man can turn away from the evidence of observation without bringing his character for philosophy into disrepute. It is by following this evidence that modern science has reached her wonderful elevation in these latter days; and if by the same instrument we can establish the doctrine of the text, it may be the means of clearing away from Christianity one of her chief stumbling-blocks—it may extend her triumphs in a new quarter, and by giving her an ascendency over the minds of the speculative, it may lead

them to cast down their lofty imaginations—to bring every thought of their hearts into the captivity of the gospel, and into the entire obedience of its humility and its righteousness.

The question of fact, then, which employs us is,—In how far man attains to the perfection of righteousness? and I conceive that, to save much false argument and much superfluous illustration, we may bring this question at once to a decisive and effectual touchstone—I would bring his conduct to an immediate comparison with the first great commandment of the law. To estimate the degree of closeness and purity with which he maintains his perseverance in the path of duty, I would fasten upon the greatest of all his duties, and to which every other is referable—I mean his duty to God; and I put it to the conscience of the most perfect man upon earth, in how far every action of his life is under the direction of this great and authoritative principle? Is God always present to his thoughts? Does the fear of Him ever accompany him through the hourly and familiar movements of his history? Is His authority as a lawgiver the perpetual point of appeal, to which he is sure to repair amid the various cases and difficulties which occur to him? Instead of abandoning his conduct to the play of earthly passions and the calculation of earthly principles, does he feel every moment of his life the fear of God operating within him, and exerting the ascendency of a great master-principle to control all the inferior appetites and propensities of his nature? My own experience tells me that I could answer most decisively for myself; and I put it to your consciences if the answer be not applicable to you. So far from feeling the fear of God to be a sentiment of constant and universal influence, there is a great majority of our time in which we never think of Him. We may at times be visited by a holy feeling of His presence and authority, but the devout affection vanishes with the retirement which gave it birth. The mien and daylight of the world are ever driving away from us the thought of a present Deity; the objects of time engross every faculty; and at the very moment that the countenance of man speaks

him to be most in earnest, and that the profoundest of his wisdom is at its busiest exercise, we shall find that it is the interest of this paltry and perishable scene which absorbs him. Look to his mind, and in the subjects which most frequently engage it you see nothing there of the grandeur of eternity, and no sublime reference to that mighty Being who gave it all its sense and all its inspiration. For the greater part of the day God is not in all his thoughts; and though he owes to Him every breath which He draws and every comfort which he enjoys, yet his conduct, so far from being under the certain guidance and authority of the divine law, is at the mercy of every caprice which plays upon him, and every fluctuating vision which comes across his senses.

The simple question is,—Ought this to be so? For if it ought not, man is in a state of actual corruption; he falls below the standard of his duty; and the doctrine of the text has the testimony of experience to confirm it. This habitual negligence of God is a decisive fact furnished by observation; and we have only to compare it with the law written in our hearts and the law written in the New Testament, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment, says Jesus Christ, whose authority as a teacher from heaven reason cannot refuse to acknowledge. But let us appeal to the natural conscience of man—and it gives us precisely the same answer. Think of God as your constant benefactor—that He made you, that He sustains you in every moment of your existence—that, to express ourselves with the simple energy of inspiration, in Him you live, and move, and have your being—that in all the joys which are scattered over the pilgrimage of life, we see nothing but the kindness of God always exerting itself in our favor, and meeting us in every direction—that though we seldom look beyond the creatures which surround us, it is God who reigns in these creatures, and makes them subservient to His most wise, His most gracious, His most benevolent purposes—that

though in the hey-day of youth we are carried along the tide of gayety without care and without reflection, it is God who gives to the spirit of man all its cheerfulness—that though we stop short in our gratitude at the benefactor who relieved and at the friend who supported us, it is God who reigns over the constitution of the mind, and could by a single word of His power make every companion abandon us, and every friend look upon us with an altered countenance—that though I call the house in which I live my own, and find in the endearments of my family my repose and my happiness, it is God who gave me my home, who spreads security around it, and fills it with all its charities —that though my path in society be dignified by the homage and civility of my acquaintances, it is God who reigns in the human breast, and administers all the delight of social intercourse—that though my eye expatiates in rapture on the landscape around me, it is the living God who beautifies the scene, and gives it all its magnificence and all its glory; in short, that every thing we enjoy is a gift—that in whatever quarter happiness is met with, a burden of obligation and dependence lies upon us—that we have nothing which we did not receive—that our all is suspended on God, and that to Him we owe all the praise, all the gratitude, all the obedience. Now, will any man who is acquainted with the movements of his own breast, say that this praise and this obedience are actually given? Are not the pleasures of life often tasted without acknowledgment? Is not the conduct of life often proceeded in without any reference to the will and authority of Him who is the author of it? Is not the mind in a state of habitual estrangement from God, His existence absent from our reflections, and His supremacy as a Judge and as a Lawgiver absent from our principles? Go to whatever quarter you please for happiness, there is no escaping the conclusion that God is the giver of it, in His pervading energy which gives effect and operation to all things. You cannot fly out of His presence, nor repair beyond the limits of His sovereignty. Of all the impossibles which ever were attempted, there is none so wild

and so irrational as to attempt an independence upon God. It is in virtue of Him that you are held together. He measures out to you every moment of your existence. He gives you not merely the air you breathe, but He gives you the faculty of breathing. He provides for you not merely the external goods which are scattered around you in such bounteous profusion, but it is He who furnishes you with the capacity of enjoying them. You talk of the pleasures of the world, and fly to them as your refuge and your consolation against the displeasure of an offended Deity, but think that it is only by a continuance of His unmerited favor that you have these pleasures to fly to. He can take them away from you; or, what perhaps is a still more striking demonstration of His sovereignty, He can make them no longer pleasures to you. He reigns within as well as without you. To Him you owe not merely what is external, but to Him you owe the taste and the faculty which enjoys it. He can pervert these faculties—He can change your pleasures into disgust—He can derange the constitution of the inner man, and make you loathe as tasteless and unsatisfying what you at present indulge in with delight, or look forward to with rapture. He is all in all. The whole of our being hangs upon Him, and there is no getting away from His universal, from His ceaseless, from His unexcepted agency. Now, do the Almighty the same justice that you would do to an earthly benefactor; measure the extent of His claims upon you by the extent of His benefits; think of the authority over you which, as your Creator and as your constant preserver, He has a right to exercise; think of your perpetual dependence, and that all around you and within you —for every moment and particle of your existence, is upheld by God; and tell me, if either in the thoughts of your heart or in the actions of your life, you come up to the demand which His justice and His authority have a title to prefer against you? The answer is obvious. It may be collected from the heart and the history of every individual. Man, though the most perfect of his kind, falls short of the glory of God. He is forgetful of the hand that

formed him, and of the right hand that guides and that sustains him.

There is a delusion upon this subject. If we look abroad on the face of society we must be struck with the diversity of character in the individuals who compose it—some, it is allowed, in the estimation of the world are execrable for their crimes, but others, in the same estimation, are illustrious for their virtues. In that general mass of corruption to which we would reduce our unfortunate species, is there, it may be asked, no solitary example of what is pure and honorable and lovely? Do we never meet with the charity which melts at suffering—with the honesty which disclaims and is proudly superior to falsehood—with the active beneficence which gives to alms its time and its labor—with the modesty which shrinks from notice and gives all its sweetness to retirement—with the gentleness which breathes peace to all, and throws a beautiful luster over the walks of domestic society? If we find these virtues to be sometimes exemplified in the characters of those around us, is not this an argument which is supplied by experience against the doctrine of the text? And will it not serve in part to redeem humanity from that sweeping and indiscriminate charge of corruption which is so often advanced against it in all the pride and intolerance of orthodoxy? What better evidence can be given of our sense of duty toward God than adherence to His law? and are not the virtues which I have just now specified part of that law? are not they the very virtues which His authority imposes upon us, and which impart such a charm to the morality of the New Testament?

Now, to carry you at once into the bottom of this doctrine, let it be observed, that though the religious principle can never exist without the amiable and virtuous conduct of the New Testament, that conduct may in some measure exist without the religious principle. Men may be led to precisely the same conduct upon the impulse of very different principles. A man may be gentle because it is a prescription of the divine law; or he may be gentle be-

cause he is naturally of a peaceful and indolent constitution; or he may be gentle because he sees it to be an amiable gracefulness with which he wishes to adorn his own character; or he may be gentle because it is the ready way of propitiating the friendship of those around him; or he may be gentle because taught to observe it as a part of courtly and fashionable deportment; and what was implanted by education may come in time to be confirmed by habit and experience. Now, it is only under the first of these principles that there is any religion in gentleness. The other principles may produce all the outward appearance of this virtue, and much even of its inward complacency, and yet be as distinct from the religious principle as they are distinct from one another. To infer the strength of a religious principle from the taste of the human mind for what is graceful and lovely in character, would be as preposterous as to infer it from the admiration of a fine picture or a cultivated landscape. They are not to be confounded. They occupy a different place even in the classification of philosophy. We do not deny that the admiration of what is fine in character is a principle of a higher order than the admiration of what is fine in external scenery. So is a taste for what is beautiful in the prospect before us a principle of a higher order than a taste for the sensualities of the epicure; but they, one and all of them, stand at a wide distance from the religious principle; and whether it be taste or temper, or the love of popularity, or the high impulse of honorable feeling, or even the love of truth and a natural principle of integrity, the virtues in question may be so unconnected with religion as to flourish in the world and be rewarded with its admiration, even though a God were expunged from the belief, and immortality from the prospect of the species.

The virtues, then, to which the enemies of our doctrine make such a confident appeal may have no force whatever in the argument, because, properly speaking, they may not be exemplifications of the religious principle. If you do what is virtuous because God tells you so, then, and then

only, do you give us a fair example of the authority of religion over your practice. But if you do it merely because it is lovely, because it is honorable, or because it is a fine moral accomplishment, I will not be behind my neighbors in giving the testimony of my admiration; but I cannot submit to such an error either of conception or of language as to say that there is any religion in all this. I am not for expunging the lovely and the honorable from the character of man. These qualities have all my friendship and all my applause; and I give them the most substantial evidence of my regard when, instead of leaving them to their own solitary claims upon the human heart, I call in the aid of religion, and support them by the authority of the New Testament—"Whatsoever things are pure, or lovely, or honest, or of good report; if there be any virtue, if there be any praise, think of these things." But I will not allow that the mere circumstance of their being lovely shall be suffered to degrade or to extinguish the authority of religion; nor can I endure such an injustice to the Author of all that is graceful, both in nature and in morality, as that the native claims of virtue shall usurp in our admiration the place of God—of Him who gave to virtue all its charms, and who formed the heart of man to love and to admire them.

Be not deceived, then, into a rejection of the text by the specimens of moral excellence which are to be met with in society, or by the praise which your own virtue extorts from an applauding neighborhood. Virtue may exist, and to such a degree, too, as is sufficient to constitute it a lovely object in the eyes of the world; but if in the cultivation of that virtue there be no reference of the mind to the authority of God, there is no religion. Such virtue as this has its reward in its natural consequences, in the admiration of others, and in the delights of conscious satisfaction; but I cannot see why God will reward it in the capacity of your master, when His service was not the principle of it; nor do I see how He will reward it in the capacity of your judge, when in the whole process of virtuous feeling,

and virtuous sentiment, and virtuous conduct, you did not for a single moment carry in your heart any reference to Him as your lawgiver. I do not deny that there are many such examples of virtue in the world, but then I insist upon it that they cannot be put down to the account of religion. They often may and actually do exist in a state of entire separation from the religious principle; and in that even they go no farther than to prove that your taste is unvitiated—that your temper is amiable—that your secret principles promote the peace and welfare of the community, and will be rewarded with its admiration. It is well that you act your part aright as a member of society; and religion by making it one of its injunctions, gives us the very best security that wherever its influence prevails it will be done in the most perfect manner; but the point which I labor to impress is, that a man may be what we all understand by a good member of society, without the authority of God as his legislator being either recognized or acted upon. I do not say that his error lies in being a good member of society: this, though a circumstance, is a very fortunate one. The error lies in his having discarded the authority of God, or rather in never having admitted the influence of that authority over his principles. I want to guard him against the delusion that the principle which he has, ever can be accepted as a substitute for the principle which he has not; or that the very highest sense of duty which his situation as a member of society impresses upon his feelings will ever be received as an atonement for wanting that sense of duty to God which he ought to feel in the far more exalted capacity of His servant and candidate for His approbation. I stand upon the high ground that he is the subject of the Almighty, nor will I shrink from revealing the whole extent of my principles. Let his path in society be ever so illustrious by the virtues which adorn it—let every word and every performance be as honorable as a proud sense of integrity can make it; let the salutations of the market-place mark him out as the most respectable of the citizens, and the gratitude of a thousand families sing

the praises of his beneficence to the world; if the actor in this splendid exhibition carry in his mind no reference to the authority of God, I do not hesitate a moment to pronounce him unworthy, nor shall all the execrations of generous but mistaken principle deter me from putting forth my hand to strip him of his honors. What! is the world to gaze in admiration on this fair spectacle of virtue, and am I to be told that the Being who gave such faculties to one of His children, and provides the theater for their exercise—that the Being who called this scene into existence and gave it all its beauties, that He may be innocently forgotten and neglected? Shall I give a deceitful luster to the virtues of him who is unmindful of his God; and with all the grandeur of eternity before me, can I learn to admire these short-lived exertions which only shed a fleeting brilliancy over a paltry and perishable scene? It is true that he who is faithful in little will be also counted faithful in much, and when regard to God is the principle of this fidelity the very humblest wishes of benevolence will be recorded. But its most splendid exertions without this principle have no inheritance in heaven. Human praise and human eloquence may acknowledge it, but the Discerner of hearts never will. The heart may be the seat of every amiable feeling, and every claim that comes to it in the shape of human misery may find a welcome; but if the authority of religious principle be not there, it is not right with God, and he who owns it will die in his sins—he is in a state of impenitency.

Having thus disposed of those virtues which exist in a state of independence upon the religious principle, we must be forced to recur to the doctrine of the text in all its original aggravation. Man is corrupt, and the estrangement of his heart from God is the decisive evidence of it. Every day of his life the first commandment of the law is trampled upon, and it is on that commandment that the authority of the whole is suspended. His best exertions are unsound in their very principle; and as the love of God reigns not within him, all that has usurped the name of virtue and

has deceived us by its semblance, must be a mockery and a delusion.

But the doctrine of the text might be vindicated even upon lower principles. I might throw out of sight entirely the first great commandment of the law, and direct my exclusive attention to the second—Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. I might apply to the human character man's own favorite touchstone, and without any reference whatever to the authority of God might try it by the great law of benevolence, reposing on its own charms and its own obligations.

This my time will not permit me to do, but I think it necessary to guard from misapprehension what I have said as to benevolence existing in a state of separation from piety. Do I mean by this to disconnect benevolence from the practice of the Christian, or to throw upon it the slightest aspersion? No, my brethren, benevolence is like to piety: he who wants benevolence has no pretensions to piety—he who loves not his brother whom he hath seen, does not love God whom he hath not seen; and let all speculation be done away, and all argument be given to the winds, rather than that this lovely and characteristic feature of the gospel should suffer the slightest obscuration. By putting the case of an amiable and romantic benevolence existing in a state of separation from the sense of God, and by lifting a voice of condemnation against it, I may have shocked the tenderness of your feelings, and made you recoil in aversion as from the harsh voice of a stern and unrelenting orthodoxy. Spare your agitations, my brethren. I have done no man injustice, for the case is imaginary. Benevolence may make some brilliant exhibitions of herself without the instigations of the religious principle; she may make some romantic sacrifices, and the quantity of money surrendered may be far beyond the average charities of the world; but give me a man who carries out benevolence in the whole extent of its sacrifices; who labors unknown in scenes where there is no brilliancy to reward him; who supports the habit of unwearied well-doing amid the growl-

ings of ingratitude and the provocations of dishonesty; who maintains a uniform tone of kindness in the retirement of his own house and amid the irksome annoyances of his own family; who endures hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ; whose humanity exists as vigorously amid the reproaches and the calumny and the contradiction of sinners, as amid the sad pictures of weeping orphans and interesting cottagers—I maintain, my brethren, that no such benevolence exists without a deeply-seated principle of piety lying at the bottom of it. Walk from Dan to Beersheba, and away from Christianity and beyond the circle of its influences, there is positively no such benevolence to be found. The patience and the meekness, and all the more difficult exercises of benevolence, must be nourished by the influences of heaven, and looking beyond all that dazzles the theater of the world, must have its eye fixed on a better and a more enduring country. Even the most splendid enterprises of benevolence which the world ever witnessed can be traced to the operation of what the world laughs at as a Quakerish and Methodistical piety; and we appeal to the abolition of the slave trade, and to the still nobler abolition of ignorance and vice which is now accomplishing in the pagan and uncivilized countries of the earth, for a proof that, in good-will to man, as well as in glory to God, your men of piety bear away the palm of superiority in triumph.

I conclude with two observations. If all Scripture and all experience can be brought in to support the doctrine of my text, should not this stir the question within each individual who now hears me—What shall I do to be saved? If there be a throne in heaven and a God sitting upon that throne, what is to become of me who have trampled on the solemn authority of His law, and come under the full weight of its condemnation? I may wrap myself in a general feeling of security that God is merciful, but in a question of such mighty import as the favor of my God and the fate of my eternity, I should like to have some better security than my own feelings which may be delusive, and my own

conjecture which may be rash and ignorant. I have no right to trust to my own conjectures in this, and far less have I any such right in the face of the authoritative message which God has sent to the world upon this very subject. An actual embassy came from God to man upon an errand of reconciliation about 2000 years ago, and the records of this embassy have come down to us collected into a volume, and lying within the reach of all who will take the trouble of stretching forth their hand to it. Why spend my strength upon any conjecture on the subject, when the obvious expedient of consulting the record is before me. Surely what God says of Himself is of higher authority and signification than what I think of Him, and if He has chosen to reveal not merely that He is merciful, but that there is a way in which He has chosen to be so, nothing remains for me but to learn of that way, and obediently to walk in it. If He says there is no other name given under heaven but the name of Jesus; if He says that it is only in Christ that He reconciles the world to Himself; if He says that redemption is only in Him whom God hath set forth to be the propitiation through faith in His blood, that He might be just and the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus, what have I to do but to count these sayings faithful and worthy of all acceptation? I have been perhaps too long of coming to this conclusion, and adopted too circuitous a line of argument to bring you to it; and while I have endeavored to maintain through the whole of this process the forms and the phraseology of a philosophical argument, which I know not whether I should have magnified, I rejoice to think that many a simple cottager has got before me, and that under his humble roof there exists a wisdom of a more exalted kind than mere philosophy can ever reach—the wisdom of a Christian who loves his Bible, and rests with firm assurance upon his Saviour. "Father, I thank Thee that while Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, Thou hast revealed them to babes, even so, Father, for so it seemeth good in Thy sight."

My next observation is in answer to this question—You

have attempted to establish the fact of human corruption —you have recommended a simple acquiescence in the doctrine of the Saviour; now what becomes of the corruption after this? Must we just be doing with it as a tremendous necessity of our nature bearing down every power of resistance, and against which it were in vain to struggle? For the answer to this question I make the same reference as before to the record. He who is in Christ Jesus is a new creature—sin or corruption hath no more dominion over him, and the very want which constituted the main element of the disease is made up to him. He wanted the love of God, but that love is shed abundantly into the heart of every true Christian by the power of the Holy Ghost. He wants the love of his neighbor, but God enters into covenant with all who acknowledge His Son and embrace the Saviour as He is offered to them in the covenant—He puts this law in their hearts, and writes it in their minds—He works in them and dwells in them, so that He becomes their God, and they become His people. The Holy Spirit is given to them who ask it in faith, and the habitual prayer of—Support me in the performance of this duty, or carry me in safety through this trial of my heart and my principles—is heard with acceptance. The power of Christ is made to rest on those who look to Him, and they will find that to be their experience which Paul found to be His—they will be able to do all things through Christ strengthening them. Is all this strange and mysterious and foreign to the general style of your conceptions? then, my brethren, be alarmed for your safety. It is not the peculiar notions of this man, nor the still more peculiar phraseology of that man, which you profess to be strange to you, it is the very notions and the very phraseology of the Bible, and you are bringing yourself under precisely the same relationship with God that you do with a distant acquaintance whom you insult by sending his letter unopened, or despise, by suffering it to lie beside you without counting it worthy of a perusal. Let this day of fasting bring you under a conviction of your sins, and let

this salutary conviction shut you up to the only remaining alternative—even the refuge set before you in the gospel. You will there find a free offer of forgiveness for the past, and a provision laid before you by which all who believe are carried forward to amendment and progressive virtue for the future. It is open to all and at the taking of all, but in proportion to the frankness and freeness and cordiality of the offer will be the severity of that awful threatening to those who despise it—How shall they escape if they neglect so great a salvation?

SERMON XIII.

[Preached at Kilmany, 20th March, 1814. At Glasgow, in February, 1817.]

JOHN XIV. 21.

"He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him."

It were well if we could strip every term, and every process signified by that term, of all the unnecessary mysteriousness which is annexed to it. To manifest is to show plainly; and the question comes to be, In what sense can an invisible being, as God or Jesus Christ, show himself plainly to creatures in this world? It appears to me that there may be two ways of it. First, you all understand what it is to have the conception of a distant friend. Your firm belief that he is your friend, is one thing; your lively conception of him is another. The belief may remain steady—the conception may vary every hour in clearness and intensity. Have you never experienced a livelier conception at one time than another of his unwearied regard, of his trusty attachment, of his affectionate looks, of his benignant countenance? Yes, you have; and in those moments a finer glow of tenderness has come over you, and a feeling of more joyful security in the possession of his friendship. Now, the same God who can endow you with one faculty can endow you with another, or bring that other, when it pleases Him, into livelier exercise. The same God who can work in you the faith and conception of a distant friend, can work in you the faith and the conception of Himself. It is very true that conception may often outstrip a well-grounded faith; but God can prevent this; He can bring the one under the control of the other. He does so

in the case of your friend, and your conceptions of him, however exquisite and lively, are restrained by the evidence of memory from running into wildness. Your conception of him may almost brighten into the vivacity of sense, and yet you may conceive no more of him than what you know him to be, and what you remember him to be. And so of God. Your conception of Him may brighten into ecstasy, and yet be restrained from running into any false or distorted view of Him by the control of a sober and rational faith —even that faith which rests upon the evidence of His word. Now this faith and this conception of God are both given us by God. In so doing, God shows Himself to the soul of man. He who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, can shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

I am not fond of using terms which might not be readily apprehended by men of a mere popular understanding, and should like to feel as if there was none of the obscurity of metaphysics in what I say when I tell you of the distinction between faith and conception. You are conceiving a distinct object when something like a sensible representation of that object is present to your fancy. When that object is an absent friend, the conception of him is at times so lively that you may have heard people say in such a case, "I think I see him; I can figure him in a very lively and impressive manner; his voice, his manner, his countenance, are all present with me." And if it be a voice which you know never speaks of you but with tenderness—if it be a manner which indicates, throughout all its varieties, a steady and unalterable attachment to yourself—if it be a countenance that never beams upon you but with a look of benignity and regard, then it is evident that this lively conception will have an exhilarating influence upon your spirits; you will have a more powerful impression of sensible comfort, in as far as it is dependent upon the friendship of him who is thus exhibited in a way so striking to the eye of your imagination. Such a visitation upon your mind as this will be a visitation of peace, and joy, and affection;

and though this be the habitual state of your spirit in regard to him whom you love, and who is at a distance from you, yet will those periods when the vision of his excellences comes in all its bright and fascinating array into remembrance be at all times counted by you as those most precious moments of delight, when his value is most strongly felt, and all the cordiality of his regards is most exquisitely rejoiced in.

Now, my brethren, to give you an idea of the distinction between this lively conception of him, which, in point of vivacity and affection, borders so nearly upon a sensible representation, and that steady faith by which the real existence of this said friend, and all the attributes of worth and of kindness which belong to him, are the matters of your conviction, the former may fluctuate from one day to another, and from one hour to another, while the latter remains absolute and entire at all times, and is just as much the object of thorough belief to-day as it was yesterday, or as it will be to-morrow. There may, perhaps, be no one moment in which I have the least doubt of his existence, or there may be no one moment in which I have the least doubt of his character, either as it regards its own intrinsic merit and its peculiar aspect of tenderness to myself. But with all this unalterable belief, there is one other thing which ever alters, and may be in a state of constant fluctuation. There are moments at which the imagination of my friend flits before my inner man in a brighter perspective; there are moments in which I have a readier command of his every feature and his every peculiarity; there are moments at which his revered person or his smiling aspect of benignity will unaccountably rush upon my heart, and fill it either with the vivid remembrance of former joy or the bright anticipations of future intercourse. Yes, there are such moments familiar to the experience of many a human being, and yet they may be succeeded by other moments when—though abandoned by all this cheering imagery, and left to the dull tenor of their more ordinary thoughts—the belief that your friend is, and that he has the same

worth of character and the same warmth of attachment as ever, remains an unvaried and an unshaken element within you.

And I trust you further perceive how, though this conception may bring all this home to the eye of your mind in a manner more pictorial and impressive than the mere belief of it can do, yet it by no means necessarily follows that your conception outruns your belief. It is the office of conception to place your friend, according to all the varied attributes which belong to him, in a brighter representation before you, but still it may not represent any more than you know to be true, and that, as a deliberate judgment of the understanding, you think you have good grounds for believing to be true. You are furnished with the proofs of memory and of past experience for believing the reality of all that you are conceiving. Conception may not add a single feature to its original; it only gives a clearer and more impressive view of all the features which actually belong to him. It may not suggest to you a single idea about him which you may not have good reason for believing to be just. It may not deal in any of the representations of falsehood, while it brightens and sets into more forcible display before you the representations of truth.

Now the same is true, my brethren, of the invisible beings and doctrines of revelation. I may have a steady and entire belief in the power of God, and yet the conception of that power, as expatiating over all the elements of the moral and material universe, may fill and elevate my imagination, and carry a greater movement of the sublime along with it at one time than another. The faith may be invariable, but the conception may fluctuate. The same is true of His wisdom, and of His goodness, and of His holiness, and of His truth. Even His tender mercy, rejoicing over all His works—from which I am so far from being excluded, that, through the word of the gospel salvation, I am invited to share in it—may be believed, and work all the essential influences of belief on my hopes and my feel-

ings. But extreme liveliness of conception is not one of the essential influences of faith. It is very liable to fluctuations. The season of its most powerful visitation may be a season of rapture, and holy joy, and delighted communion with God; but such a season may pass away, and yet the belief which sustained and gave solidity to the whole of this process may be as stable and permanent as ever. These periods of great sensible comfort, and of lively communion with God, will be esteemed by every Christian as the brightest and noblest intervals of his earthly pilgrimage. But I would have you understand that, even after the termination of one such interval, there may be a strong and surviving faith—ay, a faith giving as unequivocal proof of its existence and its vigor as at the time of its more brilliant and ecstatic operation.

Now I hold it of importance to the rationality and soundness of this whole speculation, to observe that what is true of the conception not outrunning the belief in the case of an earthly friend, but merely giving a livelier exhibition to the inner man of what was upon solid and legitimate grounds already believed, holds also true of the objects of faith which are set before us in the New Testament. I may have a far more exquisite and affecting sense of God as my reconciled Father at one time than at another, and yet the steady faith of His being my reconciled Father may never abandon me. But even at that time, when my heart is filled and delighted with this lively sense of the tender mercies of God, I may not be conceiving anything more than what I have ground for believing from fair and legitimate sources of evidence. All that the conception may do is not to add to my knowledge of God, or give me one other notion respecting Him than those I had before; but it may brighten and make clearer to my imagination those truths which I had already admitted into my creed. Should, for example, my conception put any other feature upon God than I find applied to Him in His own revelation, then would it be outrunning a sober and well-grounded faith, and well may I be branded as a visionary and enthu-

siastic religionist. But should my conception do no more than give me a more adequate impression of these things respecting God which are clearly set down in the declarations of His word; should it so fill me with a sense of His power as to give a more solemnizing impression of it in my spirit, or so fill me with a sense of His goodness in Christ as to make me rejoice with a joy unspeakable and full of glory; or so fill me with a sense of eternity as to make me sit lighter than ever to all the vexations of time, and give me the buoyancy of an animating independence on all chances of life and of fortune—why, my brethren, there is nothing wild or visionary in all this. There is no setting before me of any truth not to be found in the record. There is only an investing of such truths with that force and that color which give them an ascendency over all my feelings that is more than ever in proportion to the vast importance which belongs to them. There is nothing, surely, here to provoke the contempt of those who sneer at what they call the beatific visions of Methodism. In such visions as these there is not one ingredient admitted upon which the word of God does not put the stamp and the sanction of credibility. It is a vision, in short, made up of the solid materials of faith; and, during the whole process of such a manifestation, so far from anything being told us that is not to be found in the Bible, all the manifestation consists in this, that by it the Bible or the field of revelation becomes arrayed with a brighter and a more luminous clearness than to our eyes is habitually spread over it.

But there is still another kind of manifestation. In the first way of it, God gives a clearer and a livelier perception of Himself to the soul. In the second way of it, which I am now referring to, God may work such effects in the soul of man as may carry along with them the evident marks of His special and distinguishing favor. You may experience in yourselves a growing concern about eternity; a growing sense of your own sinfulness; a growing desire after the fullness of Christ; a growing dependence upon Him as all your salvation; a growing distrust of yourselves

and joy in the Savior; and, under the never-failing effect of this new attitude of the soul, a growing advancement in the virtues of the new creature, and a growing conformity to the pattern of worth and loveliness set before us in the gospel. Now this is a work of grace going on in your hearts, and it is of God. Others may see it, and it may be to them a manifest token of the Spirit of the living God. Yet I would not say that there was any manifestation to you in all this, till the work of grace become evident to yourselves. There are differences in this respect. With some the work may be going on for years before they see the hand of God in it, or construe it into a token for good, and they are doomed to an awful and a long-continued sense of guilt and abandonment before they can say with the apostle, Hereby know we that God abideth in us, by the Spirit which He hath given us. Others may rejoice from the very outset of their conversion, and the very first impressions of grace may be attended with such a manifestation of the Spirit as to make it evident to themselves that the good hand of God is upon them. We are not to condemn this joy as premature. Paul felt this joy at the very beginning of the good work upon the souls of his disciples, and he communicated this joy to them, and so led them to share in it, and they could not but feel a confidence that it was God who was working in them, when their revered apostle told them that he was confident of this very thing, that God, who had begun a good work in them, would perform it until the day of Jesus Christ. It is the sense of God's agency in the matter which makes every new advance in the accomplishments of the gospel a manifestation of God; and when Paul addressed Timothy—both of whom were far advanced in established Christianity—he did not barely say that they had obtained a spirit of love, and of power, and of a sound mind, but that they had obtained it from God; for God has not given to us the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

So much for the two kinds of manifestation: one consisting in a clear and direct view of God—the other in the

consciousness of His good work going on in our souls. And we may add, that the impenitent at times experience manifestations of God which are counterparts to these; that at one time He manifests Himself in wrath to their consciences; and that as He looked from the pillar of cloud and fire upon the Egyptians and troubled them, so the angry God looketh forth upon the wicked, and stands before them in all the majesty of offended justice. At another time He makes them to feel the progress of their guilt; how their souls are hardening and getting seared; how a desperate obstinacy of character is growing upon them; how every step they are taking carries them further in alienation from God; and thus, even in this world, He sends terrors to their hearts, and gleams a deep and awful foreboding over their infatuated way.

In my present discourse I confine myself to the promised manifestations of my text; and there are two sets of hearers who need to be instructed upon this point. The first are those who cannot believe that there is any reality in those manifestations, and who think that there is mysticism in the very term. These are they who associate all that is unreal with all that is invisible; and yet God is invisible, and they who live in fellowship with God must live in the constant enjoyment of a spiritual manifestation. The Spirit is invisible, and they who rejoice in the Spirit rejoice in that of which they do not know whence it cometh or whither it goeth. The varied objects of faith are invisible, and they who walk by faith, and not by sight, live under the power of invisibles. All that gives rapture to a triumphant death-bed is invisible; and we have the authority of an Apostle for the substance and the truth which lie in the joyful exclamations of a dying Christian.—O ye men of the world, who look upon the spiritual exercises of the Christian as so many shadowy illusions, it is you, and not they, who live under the government of shadows. You look no further than to the figures upon that pictured screen which hides God and eternity from the eye of your senses; but on that day when the earth is burnt up, and the heavens pass away

as a scroll, this screen shall be withdrawn, and the awful realities on the other side of it will attest that they alone live wisely in the world who live by the power of what is unseen and eternal.

But there is another set of hearers, and to them I chiefly address myself: those who do believe that there is a reality in those manifestations, but feel how miserably short they are in the experience of them—who long for the light of God's countenance, but have not yet tasted what it is to enjoy it—who know that there is a truth and a power in the promise of light and peace, and increase in the knowledge and fellowship of the Father and of the Son, but cannot say that the promise has ever been realized upon them—who stand at a distance from the joys and exercises of the inner man, and are oppressed with a sense of that darkness as to spiritual objects which overspreads all their perceptions and all their faculties. I shall, in the first place, attempt a rapid description of the state of their minds; and I shall, in the second place, lay before you the process of my text, which carries all who describe it to the manifestations they long for.

First, then, as to the state of their minds. There is a general dimness hanging over all their conceptions of those invisible realities with which a spiritual man is conversant. They believe in God, but they want a lively sense and impression of Him. They believe in Christ, but they cannot get that clear view of Him which they aspire after. They believe that God is accessible to all through Him, and this belief operates so far that when they approach the Father it is in the name of the Son, but they do not feel a lively confidence even in this way of access to God. They may not want faith, but they want liveliness of conception, and we all know that conception may become so distinct and so impressive as to approach to the nature of vision. Now you can all understand that to hear of the friendship of a distant acquaintance by the hearing of the ear, even though you have full faith in the testimony, has not so cheering an influence upon you as when you see him beside you, and

witness with your own eyes an attachment full of tenderness, and a countenance full of benignity. And so of God. The days are coming when He shall tabernacle with men, when the pure in heart shall see Him, and shall rejoice in His presence. Could we only catch a lively conception of God in Christ, we should have a foretaste of the coming joy. But many labor under a dullness of conception, and from them God is hiding His countenance. They may believe, but they have no joy in believing. They lament their darkness, and are like to give way to gloomy forebodings. They lament that while all is clearness to the eye of the body, all is dimness to the spiritual eye; and that, while the living scenery around them falls with so distinct an impression upon their senses, the God who actuates and animates the whole sits behind an impenetrable curtain, and they cannot apprehend Him.

Now it may help, on the one hand, to quiet their alarms, when they are told that they are perhaps aiming at an impossibility, for God is the Being whom no man can approach unto; and, on the other hand, it may help to assist their conceptions, when they are told that God's embodied Son was the brightness of His Father's glory, and the express image of His person—that in Him dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, and that, therefore, when they want a lively impression of the loving-kindness of God, they should think of the kindness which fell from the Savior's lips, and of the love which beamed from His countenance. But even this view of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ may be withheld from them. They want lofty and distinct conceptions of the Savior; they have not yet obtained the promised manifestations; they may have heard Christ speaking peace to them in His Word, but they have not seen Him looking peace to them with the light of His countenance.

The effect of all this may be a want of sensible comfort. If the perfection of saints in heaven is to rejoice in the fellowship of God, how can I be preparing for this inheritance who have so little of this joy and this fellowship on earth?

To be made meet for a place there, I should be making progress here in the tastes, the capacities, and the employments of glorified spirits. Now what a gloomy impression it must have upon my prospects, when I feel within myself that all this is shrouded in darkness from me—that it inspires me with no clear view and no lively emotion; and that while, like other beings who are of the earth, earthy, I can perceive well enough, and think truly enough, and feel a keen enough interest among the visible scenes and objects around me, I feel as if I had no discernment of the things of the Spirit of God—that every effort I make to conceive of them is powerless—and that when I look toward them, I see them wrapped in some deep and awful obscurity which I cannot dissipate.

I might acquiesce in this want of capacity for spiritual contemplations, if I thought it were the necessary or universal lot of Christians in the world, and that they were such as eye could not see nor ear hear, neither could it enter into the heart of man to conceive; but when I hear Christians saying, and with authority too, that God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit, I am led to the conclusion that this is a work of the Spirit which I have had no share in; and that, while others experience the light and the triumph of most animating manifestations, I am left to wander a melancholy outcast, unblest by the influences of heaven, and an utter stranger to the perception of its joys.

It aggravates my fears when I examine the other evidences of grace which are more at hand. How can I be growing in the love of God when I have no satisfying view of His countenance? I may be constitutionally generous and upright, but how can I be growing in that Christian love of my neighbor which is like unto the love of God? Where is my strength for the performance of duty while all is darkness around me, and all is languor and hopelessness within me? I may have much effort, and much thought, and much curiosity; but, sunk in this sorrow of withdrawment from light and from comfort, I must be running in uncertainty, and fighting as one that beateth the

air; and what with some parts of my conduct which I know to be sins, and other parts of it which I am not sure to be graces, I feel lost and bewildered in a path that is unknown to me.

I shall conclude this first head with observing, in the first place, that the manifestations of my text, if not enjoyed, will be much longed after by all who have begun to contract a spiritual taste; who have begun to feel that there is no sufficiency for them in the things of this world; who are dying to the matters of sense and of time, and are groping their way, though perhaps in darkness and bewilderment, after an interest and a friendship with God. In the language of the psalmist, they say with their hearts, "Who will show us any good? Lord, lift upon us the light of Thy countenance." As the hart panteth after the waterbrooks, so thirst they after God. If there be no desire after these hidden enjoyments of the Christian life, I see not how there is any love at all to the invisible Father of the spirits of all flesh. Sure I am that in the matter of earthly friendship there is something more aspired after than the mere enjoyment of a firm confidence in the regards of each other, while the parties stand at a wide and personal distance. There is a longing for personal intercourse. There is an aptitude for each other's company. There is a desire to carry forward the mere intercourse of mind from the calmness of a mental conviction in the good-will of each other to the vivacity of near and sensible society. And as surely, if there be a real love to God, will there be a delight in communion with Him; and the delight will just be the more exquisite that it be carried forward from the communion of a mere fixed and settled belief to the communion of a near and impressive manifestation; and the more your conception of God approaches to the intensity of sense, the more will be your delight that He, your friend, is brought so present and so near to you; and while the profane laugh at all this as an enthusiastic vision, and the lukewarm, with their cold and established decencies, are just, in heart and in affection, as far from God as are the former, be you as-

sured, my brethren, that you will never enjoy heaven hereafter if you have no relish for the enjoyment of heaven here; and let fellowship with the Father and with the Son; and a clear perception of the character of God; and a rejoicing sense of His mercy in Christ Jesus; and a bright overpowering impression of the grace and the majesty of His character; and, in fact, all those near views of Him, and strong feelings towards Him, and that intimate sense of His presence which comes from a close and impressive manifestation of God to the soul—let these, I say, be branded as they may with the epithets of extravagance and enthusiasm, and as if they marked a man who had let go his hold of all the ordinary principles of the world, and wandered in a region of fanatical illusion and of mystic reverie—be assured, my brethren, in spite of all this, that these are the very delights and exercises of Paradise, and the very enjoyments which shed over the eternity of the redeemed all its blessedness and all its glory.

And, secondly—though it should be anticipating a little what is to come afterwards—I know that in many instances the distinction is not adverted to between a real faith in the truths of the gospel, and a lively exhilarating conception of them. Now it is by faith that ye are saved; and therefore it is that there are people who are ever endeavoring to work up their feelings to a high pitch of pleasurable elevation, and are constantly striving after sensible comfort, and founding the most melancholy conclusions upon their want of it, and think that surely, as they have no lively manifestation of the truth, they can have no belief in it, and are therefore destitute of the main-spring and the essential element of salvation. I trust I have said as much as may convince you that faith and conception are two different things; that while the former is the principle on which the salvation of a sinner hinges, the latter affords to him those enjoyments which are most congenial to every mind that feels the world to be a pilgrimage, and heaven to be its home, and the exercises of heaven to be what they have a growing taste and a growing capacity for. But I trust

that it will be made to appear how there are other fruits and evidences of faith than the clear and lively discernment of the spiritualities of another world; that in the midst of depression there may be a strong exercise of faith; that under the hidings of God's countenance there may be a most resolute and inflexible faith; that under the operation of languid and overborne faculties there may be a steady operation of faith; that, with an utter confusion and mistiness of the mind about what is unknown, there may be a most determinate cleaving of the mind to what is known; that, laboring under the want of manifestation, there may at the same time be the having of the commandments of Christ, and the keeping of them; that previous to the accomplishment of the last clause of my text, in which our Savior promises to manifest Himself, there may be a process going on with the believer which our Savior will interpret into an evidence of love for Himself, and for which He has given the assurance that His Father will love him back again, and, to encourage him in the path of obedience, promises that He will make all his darkness to emerge in the light of a cheering manifestation.

I now come to the second head of discourse, under which I shall attempt to lay before you the process of my text, which all who describe arrive at the promised manifestations.

When fatigued and disappointed by the utter fruitlessness of all my exertions, it is most important to be told, as I am in the text before me, that the light I am in quest of is at the giving of the Savior. This is confirmed by another passage in the New Testament, where it is said that Christ shall give the light. One may arrive at a quiescent belief, but he will never arrive at clearness or vivacity of conception, or even at a right belief of the New Testament, by the mere steps of an argument. The wisdom of this world may enable me to enroll a truth even of the Bible among the articles of my speculative creed; but so to impress it upon my heart as to serve the purpose of comfort or direction, is the work of a higher hand. I now understand how truth, as to all its practical uses, may be hidden from the wise and

the prudent, and revealed unto babes; and when I turn from the parade of demonstration, and wait in dependence and prayer upon Him who is the light of the world, I see how, unless a man be converted and become as a little child, he shall not enter into the kingdom of Heaven. Meanwhile, I learn that so long as I toiled separately from Christ, and out of the way which He prescribed to us, I was toiling in vain—that I must keep by Him as the Being who retains in His custody the light I am in quest of—and giving up all experiments of my own, I must just adhere, and that most scrupulously, to the line which He has chosen to lay down for me.

Be assured, my brethren, that if the saving faith of the New Testament be not of ourselves, but the gift of God, no effort of ours which does not recognize the sovereignty of God in this matter will ever conduct us to this faith, make the effort as strenuously as you like. Bring to it all the powers of a most argumentative and penetrating understanding—betake yourselves to every such expedient for working within you a belief of the truths of the Christian revelation, as you make use of in working within you a belief of the truths of political economy, or of the physical and mathematical sciences—there may be some result, I grant you, from such an intellectual exercise; your objections may be silenced, and your judgment be subdued out of all its resistance to the truth, and your active hostility against it be disarmed, and the mind be brought into the posture of resting in the conclusion that Christianity is an authentic religion from heaven. And yet, my brethren, the faith which you think to be in you may, in fact, not be the saving faith of the gospel at all. When I read that gospel, I see fruits and influences assigned to faith which, in many thousand instances of speculative acquiescence, I cannot perceive to be realized on the heart or on the life of those who profess it. The faith of the gospel is a something different from this, for it is a something which comes out of a new heart—it is a something which works by love—it is a something which overcometh the world—it is a something which brings affection and practice, and

a new aim, and a holy walk, and consolation along with it. That faith about the matters of Christianity which the power of argument hath wrought, and wrought just in the same way that it works a faith in the matters of philosophy, is positively a something belonging to another class of principles altogether from the faith which availeth; and we are, therefore, not to wonder that it should differ from the other in the steps by which it is brought into existence—that there should be a peculiarity about the way in which it originates—that the mere operation of these expedients, which will suffice for the production of the former, should be altogether inadequate to the production of the latter; and it is under the power of these considerations—under the positive experience of the insufficiency of bare argument—under a feeling that a naked intellectual acquiescence in the truth may be utterly fruitless, and have not one particle of the life and influence of the great gospel principle belonging to it, that I count it a saying worthy of all acceptation, that faith is not of ourselves—that it is wrought in us with power—that it is the gift of God.

Now it is very true that God may be said to manifest Himself in the act of giving faith, and, further, to manifest Himself in the act of increasing the faith that we have already received. But, referring to what has been already said about the distinction between faith and conception, I do not think that invariably the one or the other of these forms all the manifestations of my text. I can figure to myself a dullness of conception when there is no abatement of the principle of faith, and the liveliness of conception with no additional vigor given to that principle. The truths of the gospel may be brought more clearly and more strikingly home to the discernment of the mind at one time than at another; and if these truths relate to the character of God, or of Jesus Christ whom He hath sent, they may appear to the eye of the understanding more brightly than before in the features of truth, or holiness, or kindness, or long-suffering. In these cases the soul is enjoying a clearer manifestation of the Father or of the Son—is exercising a

closer fellowship with them—is receiving through the medium of its mental perceptions a foretaste of those pure and affectionate transports which will be perfected in heaven when the Divinity shall reveal Himself in all the glories of an immediate presence to His worshipers—when all those features of grace and of majesty which belong to Him shall be placed before them in visible and direct contemplation, and they shall reap through all the ages of a secure and rejoicing eternity the reward of the pure in heart—they shall see God. The glass which now intercepts from the eye of the mind the realities of the future world is so dim that we see them but darkly, and no power or exertion of our own can brighten or improve its transparency. But what we cannot do for ourselves Christ can do for us. He expressly claims for Himself in the text the sovereignty and the control in the work of those manifestations. He says, I will manifest myself; and, in so doing, He gives an important practical direction to the man who seeks and is in earnest after the light which he does not yet enjoy. He tells him what surely it is of the utmost importance for him to know, and what may have an essential influence in guiding him to the manifestations which he aspires after. He tells him that his own native and unassisted powers will never lead him to the accomplishment of his object. He gives him to understand that the manifestations he is in quest of are in the hand of Jesus Christ; and if there be any difference in point of effect between the result of the process carried on without any reference to Him who alone can give to that process all its efficacy, and the result of a process carried on in obedience to Him with whom the efficacious influence is deposited, the informations of the text point the way by which this difference may be realized.

We already, then, know as much as should serve to lighten the dark and melancholy inquirer of some of his anxieties. Hitherto he has missed his object; but perhaps the reason of this is that he was out of the way to it. From the moment that this is suggested, a prospect of relief begins to dawn upon him, and the prospect is inconceivably

brightened when an infallible guide comes forward with the offer of his direction and his services. It is well that he is casting about for light, for this proves him to be awakened; and to cheer and sustain him before he enters upon the way to it, let me whisper one of the never-failing promises into his ear: Awake, O sinner, and Christ shall give thee light.

First, then, it appears from the text, and a verse a little below, that the manifestations promised by the Savior are given to those who love the Savior. The text I have already set before you; the other verse is an answer to a question respecting these manifestations: "If a man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him."

This may throw the dark and bewildered Christian at as great a distance from his object as ever. He replies, "O, but I do not love Him; and when I try I find that I cannot love Him." The truth is, that he cannot summon up Jesus Christ as a lovely and engaging object to the eye of his mind. He has not yet arrived at such manifestations, and his poor faculties cannot clothe the Savior in the vivid colors of reality; he cannot form Him into a picture on which his fancy may rest and be gratified. This is his aim; but Jesus Christ chooses to humble him into a conviction of his vanity; He checks his adventurous flight into the region of invisibles. The man was daring enough to carry his creative imagination into the other world; but he found no rest to the sole of his foot, and, baffled in the enterprise, he falls from it in despair. Why, he is precipitating the business. To use a homely phrase—and let us not disdain to press any phrase into the service of illustrating a subject so deeply interesting to all of us—he is cutting before the point. The manifestations which he must be content to wait for, and to work for in the prescribed way, he attempts to form by the creative energy of his own talents. Christ will give him light if he do as he is bid; but this high attribute of commanding the light to shine out of darkness he must not arrogate to himself. Now this is what he is doing when he sets up his own arbitrary test of love to the

Savior; and no wonder if, upon the application of this test to the state of his own heart, he is heard to exclaim, "I cannot love Him;" but give up your own test, and take to the test which your Savior lays down for you. It is a familiar and a practicable test, and is well calculated to check the aerial fancy which has hitherto occupied and misled you. "He who hath my commandments, who hath received them, and knowing them to be mine, keepeth them, he it is that loveth me."

Let us go, then, to the commandments; and though we lost ourselves in the unauthorized exercises of fancy, we shall not be so apt to lose ourselves in the obviousness of a prescribed task. We shall there find a plain and intelligible way to the thing we are in quest of; and Christ, at His good time, will give us these manifestations, which it is our duty patiently to wait for, if we firmly persevere in the course that leads to them.

But let us descend to particulars—let us take up the very first commandment of this chapter, "Ye believe in God, believe also in me." Some may think that we have not yet succeeded in clearing away the darkness; for, under the remaining influence of the error which I have been attempting to expose, they may think that to believe in Christ, Christ should stand revealed to the eye of their mind in all the impressiveness of a specific form. But what! is it necessary to have a bright and a special conception of a being before we can put faith in the word of his testimony? No, it is not. There are thousands who believe in Christ, and would stake all they hold dear in the world upon the truth of His declarations, and yet are utter strangers to any bright or exhilarating view of the Savior. I will not vouch for their sensible comfort; but, upon the strength of the saying, that he who believeth shall enter into life, I vouch for their safety. The time is coming, I promise them, when their hearts shall be blest by lively and endearing images of Christ; but in the mean time I call upon them, though they cannot bring their conceptions to a distinct view of the Savior, to keep their convictions steady and un-

shaken in the faith of Him. Hold by this as the anchor of your soul, that what He hath said is true; and like those who against hope believed in hope, your faith will prove itself a firmer principle by maintaining its vigor even in that season of darkness when the other powers and exercises of the mind refuse to go along with it—when cheerfulness has fled, when sight gives you not an object to rest upon, and conception labors in vain after images of joy. Why, my brethren, in pity and accommodation to the weaknesses of our feeble nature, God promises life to them not who conceive brightly, or who imagine vividly of the Savior, but to those who believe in His name. He leaves us not to wander among the uncertainties of fancy, but He gives us a familiar and a palpable name on which to rest our confidence. I may not be able to summon up an image of the Savior, but I can at all times lay hold of His name; and unto the invisible Being who bears it, I will ascribe all the power, and truth, and kindness which I find ascribed to Him in the New Testament. I will cleave to the saying, "Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do." On this I shall rest my salvation, for I shall cease not to pray for it in the name of Christ. On this I shall rest my hope of the promised manifestations, for in the name of Christ I will put up my prayers for them. On this I shall rest my security for keeping all His commandments, for I will go to Him, or, at least, I will make mention of His name, when I implore the will and the power of doing all things through Him strengthening me.

Thus furnished, I pass on to the other commandments; and while some, at the very outset of their Christianity, ramble in pursuit of frames, and raptures, and manifestations, let me take the humble but obvious path of duty which my Savior lays before me. Thus would I relieve myself of the pains of uncertainty; and, instead of walking on unknown ground, with no other light to direct me than the sparks of my own kindling, I go to the plain way of our Savior's commandments, and rejoice to think that, while performing the very least of them, I am taking the nearest road to the light

which I aspire after. Kind and merciful provision! I would be overwhelmed in the darkness of the higher exercises, if I were called upon at this moment to prove a rapture which I do not feel, and to rejoice in a fellowship with the Father and the Son which I am not sure that I have ever experienced. There is a vail between me and those higher exercises, and to penetrate beyond this vail, there must come down upon me from above the light of a clearer manifestation than I have yet gotten. I do not deny the truth of these manifestations. How could I, in the face of my text, and in the face of sober and declared experience from the mouth of many thousands of Christians? No, I do not deny them; I long to realize them. But, O merciful provision to the babes in Christ Jesus! to reach this ground, which is still dark to them, there is a path set before them which wayfaring men, though fools, may walk in. Jesus Christ has poured the clearest light over the every-day path of duty, and has given the solemn authority of a requirement from Him to His lessons and His laws. The higher exercises may be to me incomprehensible; but surely there is nothing incomprehensible in the exercise of kindness among the needy, in the exercise of patience among the irksome, in the exercise of forgiveness among the injurious. I must wait till I obtain light and capacity for the one; but, in the mean time, let me firmly attach myself to the other. On the ground of obvious and plainly revealed duty, let me make a straight path for my feet; let me rejoice that I have found something which I clearly and certainly know to be the will of my Savior concerning me; and strengthened by that Spirit which, in simple dependence upon the promise, I have only to pray for, let me yield a willing performance, and keep by the commandments. The Savior is not blind to what is going on in me. He sees it; and, O encouraging promise to a dark, and forlorn, and alienated creature, he accepts it as the evidence of love. In His good time He will send help from the sanctuary; He will give light and manifestation to my soul. As yet I may enjoy it not; but I shall wait for it, and, in so doing, I am

only keeping another of the commandments. "Wait upon the Lord;" let me fear the Lord; let me obey the voice of His servant; and even though I walk in darkness and have no light, let me trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon my God. It is a good thing quietly to wait for the promised deliverance.*

I am sensible that this is reversing the process which many attempt, and which many fail in. Why, at the very commencement of their course they get out of sight from all their acquaintances; they can talk of their joys and their experiences, while, by their habitual neglect of the plainer duties, they disgrace the good cause in the eyes of those who are without, and prove to them who are within that they are walking in sparks of their own kindling. Such shall lie down in sorrow. But do you, my brethren, keep by the process of my text. Give your earnestness to the every-day duties of the gospel, and force the testimony of the world by your display of its virtues and its accomplishments. The men of the world laugh at the experiences of the advanced and cultivated Christian; but do you put them to silence by a firm and consistent exhibition of whatsoever things are pure, or lovely, or honest, or of good report. Then in time you will realize the description of the apostle, "As unknown, and yet well known." Be well known in the world for your integrity, for your honor, for your humanity, for your active and disinterested benevolence, for all that the world, dark and undiscerning as it is, knows how to applaud and how to sympathize with. But in respect to the life that is hid with Christ in God; in respect to the manifestations of my text; in respect to fellowship with the Father and Son; in respect to their taking up an abode with you by the Spirit, and those bodies of yours becoming the temples of the Holy Ghost; why, in respect of all these, you must lay your account with being utterly unknown. This they do not understand, for they do not experience it, and the Savior manifests Himself to you in such a way as He does not unto the world.

* Isaiah l. 10; Lament. iii. 26.

Oh that what I have said could be converted into a lesson of patience or of comfort with any melancholy Christian who may now hear me! To divert his melancholy, I give him something to do, and refer him for his daily task to those duties of the New Testament which are of daily and hourly recurrence. This is the way revealed in my text for conducting you to the manifestations you long after. Weeks, and months, and years may elapse before they arrive; but believe and persevere, for this is the faith and patience of the saints. There may at this moment be a dark screen between you and the cheering light of our Savior's manifestations; but surely there is no such screen over the lessons of your daily walk; the duties of mutual love and mutual forbearance; the prayer for grace and light in our Savior's name; and the faith, however faint its impressions on your comforts may be, that God is waiting to be gracious, and the time of your deliverance is coming. Hold fast by what you do see, and God in His good time will reveal what you do not see. Hold fast by known duties, and you will come to experience what are yet unknown and unfelt privileges. God will do for you exceeding abundantly beyond what you have now the power either of thinking or of asking for. He will throw a radiance over your heavenly contemplations; and the Spirit of God will witness with your own spirit that you are indeed His children.

SERMON XIV.

[Preached at Kilmany, 3d April 1814. At Cupar, 19th February 1815. At Glasgow, 13th August 1815.]

ACTS XXVI. 25.

"But he said, I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the words of truth and soberness."

It might be difficult to give a definition of madness; but it is not so difficult to understand the circumstances which often dispose a neighborhood to fasten the imputation of madness on any individual. It strikes me that the leading circumstance which gives rise to such an imputation is a great devotion of mind on the part of the individual to some one theme or subject which his acquaintances around him do not understand and do not sympathize with. They can not enter into his tastes or feelings or pursuits, and therefore they call him unreasonable; and, if he give his whole mind to the subject, they call him mad. He has suffered some unaccountable topic to run away with him; and because it is a topic which has no attraction for them, they pronounce the man who is so run away with to be under the influence of derangement. We doubt not that a solitary star-gazer in some remote or Highland valley, where astronomy was never heard of, would fall under this imputation, and all his apparatus of books and telescopes would only serve to confirm it. It is true that now-a-days such a valley is scarcely to be met with; astronomers are admitted to all the credit of rationality; but this would not have happened had there been only one astronomer in the world. They have appeared in sufficient number to establish themselves, and the certainty of those practical results which all may appreciate, gives a credit to those abstract and diffi-

cult speculations, of which a few only are capable. Still, however, there are some obscure and illiterate districts where the honors of astronomy are unknown, or where only a few are enlightened enough to acknowledge them; and should one of these few give himself devotedly to the science, he would share the fate of the minstrel—"Some might call him wondrous wise, but some pronounce him mad."

Now, my brethren, I appeal to you from this judgment, and ask if, in point of truth, you think it a fair one? Is not the charge of madness fastened upon the individual in question just because he is wiser, and abler, and higher in the scale of intellectual dignity than the people around him? Do not you see that if the estimate were to be formed on the mere strength of votes and of numbers, it might be a delusive one? Should not the question of his madness be tried upon its own principles? and were it so tried, would it not be clear as day that, while he was standing on a respectable elevation, the little world of his acquaintances were groveling in all the bigotry of ignorance? And would not this have been equally true, though in the great world there had only been one astronomer? All the world might have thought him mad, but all the world would have been wrong; and his memory would have been handed down with ridicule only because in the high attributes of genius and contemplation he stood the greatest and most distinguished of the species.

A man may carry in his mind an entire devotedness to astronomy, and a man may carry in his mind an entire devotedness to religion, and in both cases there may be a circle of observers who refuse to sympathize and go along with him. It is true that religion is not purely an intellectual subject—its peculiarities are not confined to matters of speculation—they extend to the conduct, and may be exemplified by men of the humblest talents and lowest walks in society. Still, however, where there is a want of sympathy there will be a disposition to ridicule—a disposition to give names and to throw out imputations, and to fasten

the charges of madness and melancholy and Methodism on the man who is altogether a Christian. It is not to be wondered at that such an imputation should be preferred against him who is a Christian in the full extent and significancy of the term, for the very principle which lies at the bottom of the imputation, and serves to explain it, is expressly asserted in the New Testament. This principle is neither more nor less than a want of sympathy and common understanding between the men of vital Christianity and the men of the world. "Ye are not of the world," says our Saviour, "therefore the world hateth you." The children of this world are spoken of as a totally different order of beings from the children of light. Christians are called upon not to be conformed to the world, but to be conformed to something else, which we may be sure was very different from the world. The wisdom of this world is said to be foolishness with God, and with those therefore to whom the Saviour hath given power to become the children of God. And, finally, such is the want of understanding betwixt Christians and the men of the world, that John says of himself and his fellow-disciples, "The world knoweth us not;" "marvel not if the world hate you."

Here, then, we behold Christians placed in those very circumstances where they are exposed to the full operation of the principle which I have been illustrating. If Christians indeed, they will with their whole mind serve the Lord Jesus, and give their whole heart to a business in which the world cannot sympathize with them. This direction of all their faculties to what to the world at large is an unknown and unaccountable object, is the very thing which will bring down the full cry of ridicule upon them. It throws them at a distance from the tastes and enjoyments of ordinary men. It makes the Christians of the present day what Christians were in the times of the apostles—a peculiar people. It is this peculiarity which holds them up to the mockeries of the world. They are outnumbered, and the loudest laugh must rise from the multitude on the broad way. In the game of ridicule, indeed, they will have it all

to themselves, for Christians are not disposed to laugh, but to pity. Their only weapons are the still small voice of persuasion, and the mildness of an affectionate behavior. But all this will not save them from being laughed at; and if we hear of the oddities of the solitary and abstruse and devoted astronomer, we are sure to hear also of the oddities of the entire and devoted Christian.

It is true, that if all or even the majority were decided Christians, they would present such a countenance to the world as to silence the voice of ridicule. Christianity would cease to be that peculiar thing which provokes men to laugh at it. Go to a Moravian village, and you meet not with a few Christian individuals but with a Christian society, where the virtues of the gospel are exemplified in all their primitive simplicity and fullness—where every day of the week wears a Sabbath complexion, and every sentence that falls from them is tinctured with the phraseology of the New Testament—where such a faith as theologians only describe animates every heart, and such a charity as poets only dream of is realized in the practice of every individual—where all live not to themselves, but to the Redeemer who died for them—where every other business is made subservient to the business of piety—where this appears to be the main concern, whether at work among their families, or in those assemblies of love, where music falls in the gracious strains of sacredness and peace upon the ear of the wandering traveler. Holy men! you have indeed chosen the better part, and have withdrawn to the quietness of your own villages from a world that is not worthy of you! Had you mingled with us, your good would have been called evil—nor would all the mildness of your virtues have saved you from the persecution of our contempt. The imputations of madness and Methodism would have been lifted up against you, and the world's dread laugh would have been sure to have followed the men who give up all for eternity.

Now, I have to put the same question to you as before—Is this judgment a fair one? Should not the question be

tried upon its own merits? or are we to suffer the mere strength of numbers to carry it? Does it follow that we are wrong, because the weight of numbers is against us? Why, the weight of numbers is against Christianity in its present form—that is, against the Christianity of the New Testament; but we should think of the many who crowd the way to destruction, and the few who find the way to eternal life—we should think of the little flock, on the one hand, and the world lying in wickedness on the other—we should think of the very thing which is highly esteemed among men being abomination in the sight of God, and the wisdom of God being in them that perish foolishness—these, and other truths resting on the same solemn authority, we should think of, before we give way to the clamorous contempt of the multitude, or suffer the ridicule of the majority to overbear us.

The term expressive of contempt varies with the age and country. Paul was called mad in the judgment-hall of Cesarea. A man with the devotedness of Paul would in the court of Charles II. have been called a Puritan—in a conclave of high churchmen he would be called a Methodist—in our tasteful and literary circles he would be called a fanatic—in a party of ecclesiastics where coldness passes for rationality, he would be called an enthusiast—and in private life, where secularity and indifference form the tame and undeviating features of almost every company, he would, if altogether a Christian, be spoken of as a man whose wrong-headed peculiarities rendered him a very odd and unnatural exception to the general character of the species.

In the prosecution of this discourse I shall attempt to reduce what is commonly laughed at as enthusiasm into its leading ingredients, and to prove that the men who possess such enthusiasm as this are not mad, but that their words and their ways are truth and soberness.

The first ingredient is a deep sense of eternity in the heart—leading him who has it to live by the powers of a world to come. We have here both a principle and a conduct—such a principle as receives no countenance from

this world's sympathy, and such a conduct as receives no countenance from this world's example. They both serve to mark a peculiar character—to remove him to a distance from the feelings and pursuits of other men—to throw him out of the range of their sympathy. An air of peculiarity is, to the undiscerning eye of the world, an air of folly and extravagance. It provokes ridicule—it brings down epithets of contempt—it is construed into some perverse and unaccountable direction of the understanding. The light and the frivolous laugh, and your cold, rational, judicious men wonder at this devotedness of mind to an object which they cannot go along with. The man who walks by faith, and not by sight, is altogether out of their element, and they cannot breathe with comfort in his. There is a barrier betwixt them, and till the mighty Spirit call them out of darkness into light, and open their eyes, which are now blinded by the god of this world, the barrier is impassable. The man whose main concern is eternity is at antipodes with the general run of people in the world. Go at random into any company, and tell me what else is talked of than the prices, and the news, and the entertainments of the day which passes over them. Every topic is temporal; and surely, surely if out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh, every desire, every feeling, every affection is towards what is temporal. Will not the man who has his conversation in heaven—will not the man who rejoices in hope of the coming glory—will not the man who labors for the meat that endureth unto everlasting life—will not the man who is diligent to be found without spot and blameless on that mighty and decisive day which is to usher in the march of eternity—will not such a man be an exception and a rarity among the secular companies of the world? Yes, he will; and the only way to escape their derision would be to confine the elevation of his principles to the silence and the solitude of his own bosom. If he dares to whisper them he is disgraced and stared at, or the loud laugh of all his acquaintances is ready to overwhelm him.

But surely, surely it is he, and not they, who is on the

side of truth and soberness. Were I asked what is that which mainly distinguishes wisdom from folly, I would say that it is the power and the habit of anticipation. An infant has no anticipation. It is the creature of present appearances. It rambles with a delighted eye from one object to another; and if its amusement be wrested from it for a single instant it abandons itself to despair, nor does the prospect of what is to come round again the next minute offer any alleviation to its simple and unreflecting bosom. The infant rises to a school-boy, and the power of anticipation is formed in him. He can look forward to the joys of the next holiday—they soothe the irksomeness of his confinement—they make him faithful to his task, and prove that he can gather something from futurity to guide and to encourage him. At the end of his boyhood I see a further stretch of anticipation. He verges toward the grave and serious and calculating man. He looks thoughtful, and can talk of his wishes and his plans beyond the period of his apprenticeship. The stream of years carries him on to confirmed manhood, and gives the last finish to his range of temporal anticipation. He can now take a farther look into futurity—he can think of that competency which is to be the fruit of his accumulations, and that retirement which is to dignify the evening of his days—he can look forward to the settlement of those children who are now frolicking in infancy around him; and the light playfulness of their hearts, joying in the present, and caring for nothing beyond it, is in striking contrast with the state of heart in the parent, brooding in serious calculation over the plans of a distant futurity. He hath become a man, and put away childish things, and you look upon the change as respectable and manly; but tell me, my brethren, upon what mysterious principle it is, that if the same anticipation shall extend its flight a little way further, and pierce beyond the curtain of the grave, it loses in the sight of the majority of this world all its honor, and the terms of fanaticism and folly are employed to cover it with disgrace? Anticipation is the very feature of the mind which distinguishes wisdom from folly,

which distinguishes manhood from infancy. It is that feature the want of which is idiotism, and the presence of which is sense and understanding; and that man is the wisest of the wise who, in the calculations of trade, or politics, or war, can weigh the most distant consequences, and who from the eminence of his superior discernment can command the farthest view into that region of futurity which lies before him. Surely, on this very principle the man still wiser than he is the Methodist or the Moravian, whom you despise;—he who can renounce the world for eternity—he who can sacrifice the present enjoyment for the distant advantage of a place in heaven—he who, while death acts as a barrier to the plans and the prospects of worldly men, can carry his anticipation beyond it, and make it his business to lay up for immortality. You admire the far-sighted sagacity of wise and reflecting men. The man who is altogether a Christian sees farther than any of them. He shoots ahead of them all—he stands on a higher eminence, and a mightier range of prospect is submitted to him. Is this the man whom you call mad, and whom your sober and secular and business men wonder at for his enthusiasm? Yes, it is very true there is a difference in their objects;—they labor for the meat that perisheth—he looks beyond the grave, and shapes his measures by what he knows of the country on the other side of it. Time will show on which side the madness lies; she will carry us forward to our death-beds, and then she will arbitrate the question. Yes! you men of the world, who were so wise in your generation, you perhaps gained the objects you were aiming at—but where are they now? They are all over and gone, and you look back upon them as the frivolities of an idiot dream. Look at the children of light; they only can die in peace, for their futurity is richly provided for, and the way which leads to such a provision is surely a way of truth and soberness.

The next ingredient of that madness with which Paul, and every Christian like Paul, is liable to be charged, is a deep sense of God leading him who has it to do all things

to His glory. You will all admit the singularity of such a character, and the transition is not very far in this world's estimate from what is singular to what is odd, and from what is odd to what is ridiculous. Strange, that an entire dedication of man to his Maker should bring down upon him epithets of contempt! But so it is. The very term in the English language most expressive of devotedness to God, has become in the mouth of many an epithet of disgrace. That term is godliness; and it must be familiar to some who now hear me, that to say of a man, "he is one of the godly," is the most effectual way of tricking him out to the laughter of his acquaintances. How are we to account for that fear which many labor under of being detected in the attitude of prayer? Is it not because prayer is the object of ridicule? The sound of an approaching footstep raises many a Christian from his knees, and the presence of a worldly visitor forces many a parent to suspend the worship of God in his family. To pass from no family worship at all to the observance of it once a-day—or to pass from the observance of it once a-day to a morning and an evening sacrifice—would be put down by many as an approach to the extravagance of Methodism. The voice of psalms heard from the house of a man who had just begun to signalize himself by his religion, would provoke the merriment of many of his townsmen. I bring forward all this, because the most effectual method of establishing a position is to rest upon facts; and they go to prove that a principle the most fitted to dignify human beings is held by human beings in disgrace—that the praise of his fellow-men is often withheld from him who seeks the friendship of his God; and, strange to tell, that by the voice of many a society, he is the most degraded who most closely and most frequently approaches to the Monarch of the Universe!

But devotedness to God is a principle, and prayer is only one of the expressions of it. If the principle exist, it will not confine itself to this one expression. With the perfect man, it will give direction to every step of his conduct, and throw a color and an aspect of sacredness over the whole

of his history. With this principle in his heart, let him go into a company, and if, in obedience to the will of God, he tries to minister that which is to the use of edifying, is there no danger of his being rated as an enthusiast? With this principle let him go to a market, and if in that scene where dexterity is applauded, and a thousand convenient falsehoods are uttered without remorse, and listened to without indignation, he tries to acquit himself with simplicity and godly sincerity, is there no danger of his being laughed at as a simpleton? With this principle let him go to Parliament, and however pure the benevolence or splendid the patriotism of what he pleads for, is there no danger of his being branded as a saint or a hypocrite? With this principle let him stay at home, and preside over the arrangements of his family; and if in bringing them up to the Lord he dares to be unfashionable, will there be no contempt for the father and no pity for the children as the victims of a weak and fanciful scrupulosity; and in the very spirit of Festus when addressing Paul, will there not be many of his neighbors ready to pronounce him a madman?

Go not beyond the average Christianity of the world, and you escape all this. But if it be true, as the Bible says, that the world lieth in wickedness, must not every man who fears his God and keeps His commandments, go beyond the average of such a world? He must either signalize himself, or he must share in the general condemnation; and I fear that he takes up with a very meager Christianity indeed who only admits so much of it as will allow him to pass among his acquaintances without ridicule and without observation.

But let us not give way to the clamors of the majority. Let us treat this question as we would like to do every other; let us treat it rationally, and try, upon its own principles, on which side the madness lies, and on which the truth and the soberness. God is invisible; nor will He cease to be so till the commencement of that era in the history of His administration when He shall tabernacle with men. But He has not left Himself without a witness; and

sure I am that the vast majority of my hearers admit as much of the power and sovereignty of God as make it the true wisdom of man to do His will and cultivate His friendship. Our life is in His hand; He compasses all our ways —and go where we will we shall never find a place beyond the limits of His omnipresence. Did He overlook us we might be unmindful of Him; but, wonderful to tell, the same eye which embraces creation in all its amplitude, is fastened attentively upon every one of us. The same Being who counteth the stars, numbers every hair of our head, and registers every minute of our existence. Minuteness can not escape Him—variety can not bewilder Him—extent and magnificence can not overpower Him. By Him all things consist; and from the planets and the systems above us to the particles of dust which float upon the sunbeam—all is submitted to the guidance of His everlasting hand, and the notice of His vigilant and ever-discerning eye.

O ye men who live without God in the world, the mockery you pour on those who fear Him is nothing better than an idiot's laugh! The sins which you commit every hour, and which die away in forgetfulness from your conscience, are lost and dissipated amid the variety of other things which checker the history of this crowded universe. God sees them, and God does not forget them. They are treasured up in the book of His remembrance; and in that day when the books are opened, you will again hear of them. In that great day of His wrath, all the elements He has formed will be the ministers of His justice; and when this earth is shaking from under you, and these heavens scowl upon you with an altered countenance, who is there among you that shall be able to stand?

The topic is inexhaustible, and I shall therefore range all my remaining observations under a third and last head. One leading ingredient of that religion which many call madness, is a fearless and consistent adherence to the language and the doctrines and the morality of the Bible. There is among all professing Christians an avowed respect for Scriptural Christianity; but this respect is no security

whatever, if upon the plea of a sober and rational interpretation, every man may take to himself a license for the most unbounded deviations from the sense and spirit of the Scriptures. This way of molding and chastening the language of the Bible, to bring it down to the standard of our previous conception, is in fact disdaining its authority. It is taking up with a religion of our own—it is resting in the sufficiency of our own fancies; and this feeling of sufficiency will carry many much farther than to the mere exercise of garbling the record. Why, they will feel an independence upon its information altogether, and they will cease to consult it. This has often given rise to a display of ignorance and temerity which on any other subject would be positively ludicrous. In the most noted performance of the day against the vagaries of Methodism,* the laugh is often raised against an undoubted doctrine of the Bible, and what is more decisive still, the examples which are given of Methodistical nonsense and Methodistical phraseology, are the very nonsense and the very phraseology of the New Testament. They disclaim all acquaintance with the children of light and of grace; while it is the solemn language of the Bible, that they who are not among the children of light are among the children of a world lying in wickedness; and they who are not heirs of grace and the vessels of mercy, are the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction. They hold up a Christian to derision who said that "her soul was stayed upon God." Now, although Isaiah does not promise to such peace from the world, he promises a peace which the world knoweth not:—"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee." But her mind was "in a most praying frame, going out of herself and taking shelter in God." I know not how obedience to an express injunction of the apostle, "Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say rejoice," could be more truly

* Rev. Sydney Smith's paper on Methodism, in No. XXII. of the *Edinburgh Review*, pp. 342 and 345. The phrases commented on by Dr. Chalmers are there quoted from the Diary of a Mrs. Roberts, as given in the *Methodist Magazine*.

represented. But she felt herself "helpless as an infant, and depended upon God for all things." Paul must come in here for his share of the derision. He was not sufficient of himself—his sufficiency was of God; and he calls upon us to trust in the living God, "who giveth us all things richly to enjoy." But she felt that the Lord "was waiting to be gracious." What a still higher degree of Methodism must the Christian disciples of Peter have arrived at, who actually tasted that the Lord was gracious. But the "spirit of prayer and supplication was given to her." If this process be nothing better than a fanciful chimera, the prophet who foretold it was a dreamer of dreams. He should be deposed from the canon; and the only way of being consistent would be to make the other prophets and apostles and evangelists follow him successively. But "the assurance was given to her that she was accepted in the Beloved." And yet we are told that the same thing was given to the Thessalonians, when the Gospel came to them not in word only, but in power and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance. It is the constant and established way in which the assurance comes. It is always given. "You are saved by faith, and that not by yourselves, it is the gift of God." The acceptance in the Beloved may sound Methodistically in the ears of those to whom the preaching of the New Testament is foolishness; but it is the very thing which the apostle Paul and his Ephesian disciples knew themselves to be in possession of, and they gave praise to the glory of His grace wherein they had been made accepted in the Beloved. But what shall we make of their manifestations? If the manifestations of the Saviour to the soul be not a reality, then Christ is a deceiver; and the tone of truth and of tenderness which give all the charm of a most pathetic eloquence to His farewell address, are nothing better than the artifices of a hypocrite. "He that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him." Ay, and such a manifestation too, as the men of the world may well wonder at, for they have no share in it. He will manifest Himself unto His own, and not unto the world.

Now, would such men only stand on the open and declared ground of infidelity, we would be at no loss as to the kind of argument which should be brought to bear upon them; and we need be at as little loss on the ground which they have actually taken up. They avow themselves Christians, and all I ask of them is to bring their thoughts into the captivity of the obedience of Christ. We concur with them in the desire that religion were pruned of all the extravagance which has been grafted upon it; but how has this extravagance arisen? Why, by men traveling out of the record, and giving all the authority of sacredness to their own imaginations. In this way they have added to the words of this book; but is it not an equally daring invasion upon the Bible when men are found to take away from it? And if the very terms and doctrines of the Bible are held up to derision as the reveries of fanaticism, is it not a proof that these doctrines are falsified and disowned in the reveries of a spurious philosophy? Surely, if this be the message of God, all taste and imagination and science must vanish and give way before its overbearing authority! This is the great light which puts out all the lesser ones. It shines in many a conventicle, while it leaves halls and colleges in the shadow of darkness—the men whom the world call mad are walking in it, while the men whom the world call wise walk in the sparks of their own kindling. The god of this world has blinded them—he has surrounded the truth as it is in Jesus with associations of meanness and contempt. To their perverted minds he has turned the preaching of Christ into foolishness, and given to the words of truth and soberness the coloring of a visionary's dream.

This is a sad delusion; and it is woeful to think how many thousands are held in it. There is not a secular company you can go into where piety would not be laughed at as an extravagance, and where the man who is altogether a Christian would not be looked upon as having forfeited his pretensions to sense and soberness. The general tone of society is at antipodes with the tone of the New Testament; and though you were to go to the very outermost limits of

lawful accommodation, you would, if sanctified by the faith that is in Jesus, stand at an unapproachable distance from the men of the world, and carry such an aspect of singularity in the whole system of your concerns, as would mark you out to be a peculiar people. This is what thousands recoil from, and they tamely surrender themselves to the influence and example of the overwhelming majority around them. They follow the multitude to do evil, and with the multitude they will perish:—"For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my works in this sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed when He cometh in the glory of His Father with the holy angels."

There is only one part of the alternative which the Christian minister can press upon you—Come out from among them, and in the language of Peter to the Jewish multitude, "Save yourselves from this untoward generation." Then they had to sustain the persecution of violence, and now you will have to sustain the equally effective persecution of ridicule and contempt. Christ endured the contradiction of sinners, but it was for the joy that was set before Him. The same troubles await you here, but if you endure unto the end, you will share in the same triumphs hereafter. Take not up with a measured Christianity; bid adieu to all partitioning betwixt Christ and the world. He who followeth Him must forsake all; and the work of providing for eternity is surely ample enough in its exercises, and rich enough in its rewards, to engross and to occupy the whole man. Suffer not any one thing to come into competition with it. It is only against one competitor that I have attempted to arm you—the opinion of your acquaintances—many of whom may wonder at the change; and when they see in your life and conversation the fruits meet for repentance, may denounce them in every company as the oddities of an altered man. This you may look for, and this you must brave. It is the trial of your faith; and when I take a survey of that unchristian complexion which appears so broadly and so visibly on the face of the world, I can not but think that the Christians of the day have the very same

exercise of principle to go through with the Christians of a more stormy and unsettled period. There is a greater similarity than is generally conceived—the only difference is in the species of persecution; and when I think of the many thousands who in the high flush of gallantry and honor would rather die than be affronted, I will not say that the persecution of contempt is not more tremendous than the persecution of personal violence. It will cost you nothing to be just such a Christian as the average of those around you; but to pass from the nominal indifference of the age to the entire and devoted Christianity of the New Testament, is almost as mighty a stride as to pass to it from the abominations of heathenism. Be assured that in such a cause singularity is wisdom, and a prudent accommodation to the world is madness. It is only a little while that they will have to laugh at you, or to say of any one of you, that he is beside himself. God, and eternity, and the Bible are with you, and what though the men of the world be against you? A few years will bring round your vindication; and amid the awful realities of the judgment, it will appear that the way of the derided Christian is indeed a way of truth and soberness!

SERMON XV.

[On the closing Sabbath of his ministry at Kilmany, July 9, 1815, Dr. Chalmers preached three short sermons—the first intended to awaken the secure—the second to direct the awakened—the third to counsel the believer. The second of these sermons, on the text Isaiah lvi. 1, 2, is omitted here as occupied with the same topic which was insisted on in the "Address to the Inhabitants of the Parish of Kilmany." (See Works, vol. xii. p. 71.) The introductory paragraph of the first sermon, in which there was an allusion to the special circumstances of the day, I have not been able to recover, so that it opens abruptly.]

HEBREWS III. 7, 8.

"Wherefore as the Holy Ghost saith, To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts."

But this is a subject on which I can expatiate no more, and you will forgive me if I should even studiously keep aloof from it in the future course of this day's services. It is a subject, the introduction of which may unfit the mind for purer and better exercises. It may distress without edifying. It may hurt the speaker; and those who are around him, while deeply affected with one of the many fluctuations of time, may in fact not be hearing for eternity. This is the higher ground to which I want to confine myself.

A man in common language is called hard-hearted who would refuse his tear and his sensibilities on an occasion like the present. But he may give way to all the excesses of tenderness, and yet be hard-hearted in the sense of my text. An object of sight may engage his every affection; and when that object is shifted away from him, he might abandon himself to the violence of grief. Yet wonderful to tell, in the matters of faith, the heart of this very man might remain hard as a nether millstone. Eternity with all its mighty claims upon the attention of every imperishable being might have no power to move him. The unseen God who gives him every breath might knock at his

bosom by the warnings of His providence and His ministers, and it remain shut and shielded against them all. That guilt which the angels see him to be covered with he might not see nor be sensible of; and because there is nothing which the world can point its finger at—nothing which the people around him who are as spiritually blinded as himself can fasten upon him as a deformity in their eyes—he may remain unappalled when we tell him that there is a lurking sinfulness within, about which it were well if we could soften his heart, and fill it with the suspicions and alarms it has yet been a stranger to—that with all his decencies and his accomplishments he is a forgetter of God—he is alive to the world, but he is dead to the Maker of it—he is an habitual stranger to the influence of God's authority over him, and if he remain so, God will turn him into hell.

Let me, therefore, make one attempt more to pull down the strongholds of carnal security within you. I address myself to the careless and unawakened—to those who have not yet become seriously alive to the danger of their souls—to those who have never yet pressed home upon their consciences the high questions of sin and of salvation—to those who have hitherto been in the habit of spending their days as if their all were in the world, as if eternity lay far, and very far in the background of their contemplations—as if it were seen to stand at such a vast and immeasurable distance from them that it offered no immediate call upon their attention whatever; or, to speak more correctly perhaps, as if it were not seen and were not looked to at all. Yes! my brethren, there is a thick covering upon the face of these people; and it does not lie within the strength or compass of a human arm to draw aside the vail which hides from them the realities of the spiritual world. This, my brethren, I can vouch to be the result of all my little experience as a Christian minister. I feel that there is a power of resistance in human nature above the power of argument and beyond it—that something else must be brought to bear upon you than the demonstrations of human reasoning or the eloquence of a human voice—that these have all the

feebleness of carnal weapons when brought into the contest with the dark and sullen and obstinate enmity of the natural mind against the things of God—that another power, mighty to the pulling down of strongholds, must be called in to aid the high service of the Christian ministry—that the man who rests his hope of success on his own might or his own wisdom puts this power away from him, and that the only right attitude for grappling it with our people is that of the apostle, who rested all his sufficiency on God, and never thought of himself but with weakness, and with fear, and with much trembling.

I desire, therefore, in what remains to throw myself upon the aids of the Spirit of God, and I shall endeavor, in the further prosecution of the subject, to soften your hearts, first, by a sense of guilt; secondly, by a sense of danger; and thirdly, by the touching argument of my text—giving you to know that the call of to-day may never be repeated—that the season of grace may not be prolonged to the uncertain morrow—and that while at this interesting now, all who hear the word of salvation and will to accept of it shall be welcome, they who put it away from them are just hardening their hearts against the solemnity of all future warnings, and that the call of another day may never be brought to bear with energy upon their consciences.

I. Harden not your hearts against a sense of your guilt—look fairly at the matter. I am sure that many, if not all of you, must be sensible that against the God who brought you into being, and keeps you in it just as long as it pleases Him, and tells you what is His will, and what is your duty—that against Him you have times and ways without number been guilty of positive and specific sins. But some, my brethren, have fewer visible transgressions than others, and they compare themselves with themselves, and thus bring their conduct to the low standard of human estimation, and they pronounce upon themselves a very smooth and a very satisfying verdict. What then do they make of their Bible, wherein we are told that the heart is deceitful above all

things, and desperately wicked—that the whole world is guilty before God—that men by nature are the children of wrath, and that, unless the remedy provided in the gospel be taken and applied, it is a wrath which abideth on them? Why, my brethren, these truths are seldom looked at, and yet if they would seek a little farther into their own hearts, these truths might be made manifest to their consciences. Go not, my brethren, to deceive yourselves into a light sense of your exceeding sinfulness, because the men around you have little to reproach you with. Look not to the people around you, but look to God. It is not so much this one act of sin and that other act of it which makes you a sinner in his eye. It is the whole bent of your hearts being away from Him. It is, what I am sure you must be all conscious of, my brethren, your perpetual tendency to turn every man to his own way, and to think not and care not whether God has a will and a way for you. It is the want of a habitual commitment of yourselves to His guidance. You have got your creation from Him, and many gifts and enjoyments to please you after you have been created.—And how come you on with them? Why, just living as if your great end were to please yourselves, and to make yourselves happy with the gifts, and forget the giver. God had an end in your creation, but you never mind His end, and make your own end take the precedency of His altogether. When He formed His creatures He did not from that moment give up all further concern with them. He has a will for them to observe, but they follow after their own will—and only give them enough of the good things which God has provided, they are perfectly satisfied to give up all further concern with God. It is this disinclination of the heart to Him which forms the very essence and principle of their guilt—which puts the inner man into a state of rebellion—which makes one and all of us in our natural state live without God in the world, and which, under all the varieties of outward conduct—at one time monstrous, at another ordinary, at another becoming, at another amiable—constitutes us guilty of hourly and habitual disobedi-

ence against Him. Harden not your hearts against the exceeding sinfulness of all this to forget God who gives you the very things which steal your hearts away from Him—to disown Him who, were He to withdraw His supporting hand, could make you fall to pieces—to resist His pleading and entreating and remonstrating voice when He calls upon you for the glory due unto Him—to cast Him off from that ascendency over you which is surely His right—and to banish from your hearts the principle of respect unto His will, and of reverence for His character and His name.

II. Harden not your hearts against a sense of danger. When one thinks of his guilt he feels, or he ought to feel, remorse. When one thinks of his danger, he feels, or he ought to feel, alarm. There is such a thing as a determined shutting out of both these sentiments from the heart; and this is just the hardening of the text. It was by Pharaoh's heart being hardened against the terror of the awful threatenings which were sounded in his ear, that he persisted in his own infatuations, and got all these threatenings realized upon him. And this will be the result of the hardenings of your heart, too, my brethren. Unless the heart of stone be taken out of you, and a heart of flesh be given, and you become soft and easily persuaded by the terrors of the Lord, those terrors will all be turned into realities. Instead of the prospect you will soon have the possession of the coming misery; and for the apprehension of God's wrath now, you will be doomed then to the dire and everlasting endurance of it. How, think you, can it be otherwise? God, your maker and your absolute proprietor, tells you what He wants you to do for Him—and the thing is not done—and He is cheated of the loyalty of His own creatures—and they walk in the counsel of their own hearts and in the sight of their own eyes—and they chalk out a line for themselves, which they willfully persevere in. If He had said, "I leave you to do as you like," good and well; but He has said—and has He not the right of saying—"This is the way, walk ye in it;" but no, we turn every man to

his own way, and will not have God to reign over us, and cast off from us the yoke of His authority, and walk in the imagination of our own hearts—and all this in the face of God warning and pleading and threatening and telling us, in language too solemn to be treated by us with mockery, that the man who continueth not in the words of the book of His law to do them, is accursed. O, my brethren, go not to dispose lightly and easily of the warnings of God. Go not to think of Him as of a God that can be mocked or turned from His purpose. It strikes me as an awfully emphatic description of God, when we are told of Him that He hath said it, and shall He not do it? Let us think of the solemnity and the number of His sayings directed against the children of iniquity; and let us farther think that it is enough to stamp us all the children of iniquity that our hearts are habitually away from God. What more damning iniquity than to refuse our hearts to Him who gave us them—who set them and who keeps them beating—who requires them of us in these words, "My son, give me thy heart"—and who tells that He will at last set this sin in all its sinfulness before our eyes, and bids us consider, "we that forget God, lest He tear us in pieces, and there shall be none to deliver." Be assured that the threats of God have a meaning, that the warnings of God have an accomplishment, and that there is not a single denunciation He has uttered which does not carry a terrible reality along with it. As surely, my brethren, as these bodies of yours shall be carried to the grave, so surely shall these souls of yours return to the God who gave them. There is an account to be given in. There is a day for the manifestation of God's wrath against all unrighteousness of men. There is a judgment-seat to be raised in the sight of men and of angels. There is a great convocation to be held, at which all of this world, and many of other worlds, shall be present. The angels who come in glory will not witness on that day the weakness of a degraded and an insulted God. O no, my brethren, there will be a terrible vindication of truth and justice and holiness and majesty. On that day

each unreconciled sinner will mourn apart; and I call on each who now hears to look home to his own bosom—not to stifle any movement of conscience which he may feel there, but to put and to press the high question of his acceptance with God, and not to give it over till he has thoroughly sought after the way of peace, and assuredly found it. "To-day, while it is called to-day, harden not your hearts."

III. And O that this prominent consideration of the text had its right influence upon you, my brethren. This is my third and my last head of discourse. Here you all are in life and in the exercise of your faculties—and what is the interesting point you occupy? Why, my brethren, there is not one of you who may not find peace with God if he will—who may not obtain eternal life if he will—who may not come to a gracious and accessible Saviour, who may not obtain mercy to pardon him, and grace to help him, if he will. All, if you will, my brethren. But you may not will to forsake all and come to Christ. You may not will to give up your evil deeds and your evil habits and return unto God, doing works meet for repentance. You may not will that that heart of yours should resign its own imaginations, and be devoted with all its affections to Him who formed and who redeemed you. You may not will to be altogether wrought upon by the constraining influence of the Saviour's love, and live no longer to yourselves but to Him who died for you, and who rose again. No; you may perhaps like better to go on in the old and wonted way, and then you just realize upon you the words of the Saviour when He said—"And this is their condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil."

But O recollect, my brethren, that if this be your present state, it is not a state which it will do to die in; it is not that state which it will do to carry to the grave with you. Here we are alive and on the face of the world. Think of the ashes of the many generations that are below

you. We are surrounded by the monuments of the dead, and you are just now sitting on the dust of men of other times. In a little while, and you will lie down among them; and O how many souls which once owned these moldering bodies would prize the opportunity of you living men. O in what lively colors do they see the folly of that desperate infatuation which hung over them during their abode in the world, and in which I call on you, my brethren, no longer to harden yourselves. Go not to say, that it is time enough. The call is to-day. Let alone till to-morrow, and what may be the consequence? Some may be dead—many will be out of the way of those arguments which I am now bringing to bear upon you. The truths you meet with here you will not so readily meet with at the business of your shops and your farms and your workhouses. But, most impressive consideration of all, to-morrow comes, and it finds one and all of you who now resist the call still harder and more impenitent than to-day found you. You are hard indeed if you resist this day's call; but the very resistance will make you harder still. It is a mischief which grows upon you every hour. He who is proof against the solemnity of a present warning is likelier far to be proof against the solemnity of a future; and thus, my brethren, the evil grows upon you continually. Sin gains a firmer ascendency. Satan holds you more closely in his wiles; and never is the hardness of a human heart seen in more affecting colors than it often is in an old man at the brink of eternity. Hold out no longer. Feel the necessity of some great movement in the matters of religion ere you die, and begin at this moment to resolve, and to learn, and to stir yourselves in the work of going about it. I will not try any other eloquence upon such a subject than the eloquence of simplicity and affection; and I therefore conclude with urging it as my warmest, my friendliest, and most earnest adieu to you, to feel the impression of this one truth—that something must be done; and with the farewell voice of to-day, while it is called to-day, I beseech you, my dear friends, to take to the doing of it immediately.

SERMON XVI.

COLOSSIANS II. 6.

"As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him."

Nothing can be clearer from both the doctrine and examples of the New Testament, than that a man changes the course of his life on his becoming, in the true sense of the term, a Christian. There is no such thing as receiving Christ, and after that walking just as you were wont to do. Paul tells us in the beginning of this epistle, that he was thankful to God when he heard of the faith of the Colossians. In the verse preceding the text he tells us that he joyed when he beheld their order. There was a method or line of proceeding which a man who adopts the faith of Christ must necessarily observe, and it was from their observance of this method indeed that he inferred the steadfastness of their faith in Christ. There is such a thing as learning Christ differently and receiving Him differently; and according to the way in which we receive Him will be the way in which we shall feel it our duty to walk in Him. Some receive Him as a dispenser of forgiveness only, and they walk securely on in the commission of sin; others add to His former capacity that of a teacher, but overlooking the doctrine of being able to do nothing without Christ, they satisfy themselves with such decencies of conduct as they can observe—such proprieties of civil and social life as they can act up to even on other principles than that of submission to the authority of Christ; and as for the more spiritual obedience of the devoted Christian, they make no attempt after it, but just do as they can in their own strength, and make over the mighty burden of all their deficiencies on the atonement of the Saviour. Others again receive

Him both as their Sanctifier and Saviour, and they never stop short at any one point of attainment under the feeling that they can get no farther; they do not rest satisfied with the civil and social proprieties of life under the impression that their nature is incapable of higher or larger measures of obedience. They know that the believing Christian is backed at all times by the promised aids of the Spirit of God, with the dispensation of which Christ their Saviour is intrusted, who has become Christ their Sanctifier also; and therefore counting on this mighty accession of strength to all their endeavors, they do not strike the low aim of lukewarm decency, but they devote themselves to the obedience of the Gospel in all the extent and spirituality of its requirement—their aim is to be perfect, even as their Father in heaven is perfect. From the more obvious right things which they begun with, and which in my last discourse I urged you to begin with immediately—such as fidelity and plain-dealing and courteousness, and the avoiding of all that is plainly wrong, and such other moral accomplishments as the world can admire, and as worldly men with the profession of Christianity can practice, and think they do enough—I say, from all these moral accomplishments they proceed onward to higher and greater things than these. I know that at this point they are looked upon by the men that are without to have entered into the borders of fanaticism. They are abandoned by the respect and sympathy of neighbors; they are looked upon as having got into a visionary region of feelings and spiritualities and devotional sentiment; they are at one time accused of indifference to good works, not because they neglect them, but because, with every diligence in the doing of them, they aspire after still higher and better accomplishments; they are at another time charged with attempting a pitch of obedience far too strict and elevated and holy for the feeble powers of humanity, and so they readily allow it to be; but they have received Christ as the Lord their strength as well as the Lord their righteousness, and they go to Him daily upon the errand of getting power for the high achievements

of a spiritual obedience, as well as upon the errand of getting pardon for those many defects of which they are most deeply and feelingly sensible; and they do not miss their errand, because they know in whom it is that they have trusted, and an actual power is made daily to rest upon them which explains the whole difference in point of attainment between them and others, and on the strength of Christ's supplies they not only outstrip their neighbors upon the ground of ordinary and familiar duties, but they are raised to an impassable distance from them; and in the high and difficult enterprise of charity and forbearance, and devotion of self and all its interests at the call of principle, and habitual sense of God and a constant habit of acting to His glory, they carry over the whole face of their history the aspect of a very peculiar people, causing the men who are without at one time to laugh and at another to wonder, and at another to yield the reluctant homage of their respect and admiration.

In the prosecution of the following discourse, I shall enter more at large into the three different ways of receiving Christ, which I have rapidly glanced at in my introduction, and shall attempt to lay before you the kind of walk corresponding to each of these ways.

The first way of receiving Christ is to take Him for the single object of forgiveness; the second is to take Him both as a priest who has wrought out forgiveness, and a teacher who has prescribed a rule of life to us; and the third way is to take Him as a priest and a teacher and a sanctifier, who, in this last capacity, enables us who so receive Him as to act up to the rule of life laid down by Him as our teacher.

I. The first way of receiving Christ I take to be very common—a resting in Him for forgiveness and a willful going on in sin at one and the same time—a taking of Him for our all-sufficient atonement, and for this object singly; and what is the walk corresponding to this view of the matter?—why, just such a walk as you may see often ex-

emplified in zealous professors of the faith—men of declared and very ostensible orthodoxy, and who resist all admonitions to duty, just as if their resistance formed part of their creed. I am not speaking of the erroneous speculations of authors—I speak of the practical error of private Christians, and I do think it is an error to be often met with among men who have a relish for doctrine and do attend to the subject of their acceptance with God. Why, they do cultivate a determined confidence in the sufficiency of Christ for pardon, and just as if they liked to put this sufficiency to the trial, they go on contracting new sins every day, without its ever occurring to them that to make head against these sins and to cast off their dominion, formed part of their calling as the disciples of the Lord Jesus. With the exception of the single notion they have gotten from the time they became what they call orthodox, they remain just as they were. This notion is that by determinedly trusting in Christ they will obtain the forgiveness of all their sins, and they exercise a kind of trust which quiets and satisfies them in the mean time, but in every other respect they are quite the old man—not a single vice of heart or of temper or of conduct that does not remain in all its strength with them; and what makes the case still more hopeless, they do not seem to think that to struggle against all this forms any part of their business as Christians. Nay, they somehow or other look upon any anxiety upon these points as a thing that would spoil the entireness of their orthodoxy. It would betray a want of faith in the sufficiency of Christ; it would be an invasion upon His province by trying to do themselves what He has power enough to do for them, and will do for them if they only believe. It is to take the honor of their salvation out of His hands; and thus their remissness in practice has got a kind of principle in which they glory, and which they would think it wrong if they gave up, to rest upon. You see, then, how difficult it must be to dislodge these people out of the stronghold of security in which they have intrenched themselves, and how hard to beat them out of their indolence

and their sin when being free from all anxiety on these points forms part of that very system by which they think they are doing honor to the Saviour. Their walk in all ordinary matters then will just be the same after they have so received Christ as before they received Him. There may be a change in some of those easier and more practicable things by which they think they do more direct honor to the Saviour and more openly testify their faith and their attachment to Him—such as more frequent attendance on His express ordinances—more exclusive association with people who think as they do themselves—more decided separation from those who think differently. All this is very easy, and it is acted up to; but as to gentleness in domestic life, or honesty in social life, or usefulness in public life, or any one thing which costs them a struggle with their taste or temper or inclination, this they do not look upon as forming any part of their calling; and it is grievous to think how at the very moment that they are dividing Christ, or worshiping a Christ of their own, or taking away from the Christ of the New Testament a number of His revealed characters, and shutting out from their conscience altogether the impressiveness of His solemn remonstrance—"Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?"—it is truly grievous to think that all the time they look upon themselves as doing Him honor, and that Christ is magnified by them, in no one part of their conduct do they ever think of living to His will, but to their own.

II. But there is another class of professing Christians who are so far scandalized at the errors and abuses of those I have already noticed, as to receive Christ for a teacher as well as for an atonement. I think I am quite sure that there is a very numerous set of people who neither discard from them the notion that Christ's death is an atonement for sin, nor the notion that Christ's will has a binding authority over the conduct of all His disciples; but who think at the same time that, as they have carried their own natural understanding to the doctrine of the atonement, and acquiesce in

it, so they may carry their own natural strength to the performance of the duties, and be able to accomplish them in such a way as to secure their acceptance with God. Now, what is the effect of this? In their own strength they are able to do many things without any sense of God's will urging them to the performance at all. Is it not quite competent, for example, to a man, without any reference to Christ or religion whatever in his heart, to feel a movement of compassion at the sight of distress, and to relieve it—to feel a movement of indignation at the meanness of dishonesty, and be upright—to feel an animating glow of cordiality in the discharge of civil and friendly attentions, and be courteous—to feel all the delight of occupation in the bustle of active and useful employment, and have a public-spirited readiness to all good works? Now, it so happens that the first days of professors are often woefully destitute of all these social accomplishments, and when urged to them by the will of Christ, they bring their wrong-headed orthodoxy in resistance to them, and bring a most lamentable discredit on the faith which they profess, by a most unlovely and revolting exhibition of all that is sour and repulsive in ordinary conduct, combined with a system of religious opinions, stanch, intolerant, flaming, and obstinately adhered to. This puts the second class upon high vantage ground, and much may be learned from what each of them is heard to say of their dislike or opposition to the other. You are men of works, say those of the first class; but we have Scripture on our side, for by faith is a man saved, and not by the works of the law. Our confidence is as much better grounded than yours as the purity of Christ's righteousness exceeds the purity of man's righteousness; and this, combined with many texts of Scripture, gives these people the appearance of some reason and a great weight of Bible authority on their side. On the other hand, Ye are men of faith, say those of the second class, and ye dislike works, and that very thing of which the Bible requires us to be zealous you discard from your system altogether. Nay, you go so far as to fasten the brand of heterodoxy on our zeal for morality; but we

have Scripture on our side as well as you, and by the correctness of our conduct and the native claims of our system —which befriends virtue—on the admiration of men, we are quite sure that we are going more scripturally about the business of our religion than you who despise what the Saviour taught, and put away from you all that is practical in the writings of His apostles. This is what each can and does say of the other, and I call upon you to mark the defects of each. The first are most egregiously wrong by the want of a zealous and hearty concurrence in the duties of the Christian life, and they do not see afar off, and they forget that every true Christian is purged from his old sins; and they are blind to this truth, that to put off the deeds of the old man, and to put on the new man and his works, forms a most essential part of their calling as the disciples of the Lord Jesus. And the second are also most egregiously wrong, for they are blind to another most essential truth—they do not acknowledge their natural inability for any good thing—they profess to receive Christ as their teacher, but it is only as a teacher of those things which they can do without Him strengthening them—they strike the low aim of such duties and such accomplishments as man can arrive at by his own strength—they may and they do admit the use of Christ as an atonement, for they allow that they have their infirmities, and that He by His death wrought out an expiation for them; but they do not seem to think that there is any use for Christ as the purifier of a degenerate world from that corruption which the world cannot, with all the force of its natural principles, shake off. There is one sense in which they allow Him to be a purifier, and that is by the tendency of His sublime and excellent precepts to reform and exalt and purify the whole man. And so they would if they were obeyed. But here lies the very point of their defectiveness. They think it is enough if they just yield such an obedience to the precepts and such a conformity to the example of Christ as they find themselves able to compass and to make out in their own strength. They are blind to the truth, that in order to these precepts

taking effect upon them, there must not merely be a voice without—calling upon them to do, but a power within—enabling them to perform. Now, this power is not in them by nature; and they think it enough if they just yield such a degree of obedience as nature can accomplish, or, in other words, no spiritual obedience at all. The power must be put in them by grace, and must be earnestly prayed for, and must go along with every one exercise of duty, and thus it is that Christ acts as the purifier of a corrupt and degenerate world, not merely by the delivery of excellent rules, but by the dispensation of strength for acting up to them. And these men who feel not the necessity of this strength—why, they will often be more decent and orderly and kind and upright and honorable than their neighbors around them. There are natural principles in the constitution of man which secure a certain measure of all these virtues in many individuals of the race; but as to that obedience which no other strength but the might conferred by the Spirit on the inner man can accomplish—the obedience of the heart—the obedience of love to God—the obedience of self-devotion and self-denial—the obedience of not being conformed to the world, and the setting our every affection on the things which are above—the obedience to which the constraining love of Christ can alone prompt us, and which the grace of Christ can alone enable us to yield, even that of living no longer to ourselves, but to Him who died for us, and who rose again—why, my brethren, this is an obedience which, with all their decencies and proprieties, they never think of aspiring after—this is an obedience, the very attempt at which many would deride as fanatical and visionary and enthusiastic. This is an obedience which the first class put away from them; for, occupied as they are with the single sentiment of dependence on the righteousness of Christ, they are for no personal obedience of their own at all. And this is an obedience which the second class equally put away from them, for there is a something else at which they stop short and with which they rest satisfied—even that humble measure of decency and propriety and social

virtue and civil accomplishment which any man of any fortune and good education can attain, though he never apply for the strengthening influence of the Spirit, nor pray in the name of Christ, nor avail himself of that peculiar provision which the Gospel has instituted for redeeming us from all iniquity, and purifying us unto the Son of God a peculiar people zealous of good works.

With both the one and the other of these classes, there is a something which stands in the way of their vigorously pursuing that line of new and spiritual obedience which every honest Christian aims sincerely to make progress in. With the first, it is the sentiment that Christ has already wrought out a righteousness for them—and it is true that He has wrought out a righteousness for them who believe; but how can they be said to believe if they put not faith in all His sayings, and if one of the most solemn and authoritative of these sayings, "Without holiness no man shall see God," has no impression upon them. With the second class, it is the sentiment that no more obedience can be exacted from me than that which I can yield; and thus while Paul says our salvation must be altogether of works or altogether of grace, they eke out what is wanting in the one by what they have done in the other, and as there is no saying with how small a portion of each they will satisfy themselves, their obedience will be no more than the strength of nature can yield—that nature which the Bible tells us is corrupt and alienated from God.

III. But it is not enough that you receive Christ for the single object of forgiveness, or as a priest who has wrought out an atonement for you; for Christ offers Himself in more capacities than this one, and you do not receive Him truly unless you receive Him just as He offers Himself. Again, it is not enough that you receive Christ only as a priest and a prophet; for all that He teaches will be to you a dead letter unless you are qualified to understand and to obey it; and if you think that you are qualified by nature, you in fact refuse His teaching at the very time

that you profess Him to be your teacher, for He says, "Without me ye can do nothing." You must receive Him for strength as well as for forgiveness and direction; or, in other words, you must submit to Him as your King, not merely to rule over you by His law, but to rule in you by His Spirit. You must live in constant dependence on the influences of His grace, and if you do so, you never will stop short at any one point of obedience, but knowing that the grace of God is all-powerful, you will suffer no difficulties to stop your progress; you will suffer no paltry limit of what unaided human nature can do, to bound your ambition after the glories of a purer and a better character than any earthly principle can accomplish; you will enter a career, of which you at this moment see not the end; you will try an ascent of which the lofty eminence is hid in the darkness of futurity; the chilling sentiment that no higher obedience is expected of you, than of yourself you can yield, will have no influence upon you, for the mighty stretch of attainment that you look forward to, is not what you can do, but what Christ can do in you; and with the all-subduing instrument of His grace to help you through every difficulty, and to carry you in triumph over every opposition, you will press forward conquering and to conquer; and while the world knoweth not the power of those great and animating hopes which sustain you, you will be making daily progress in a field of discipline and acquirement which they have never entered; and in patience and forgiveness, and gentleness and charity, and the love of God and the love of your neighbor—which is like unto the love of God, you will prove that a work of grace is going on in your hearts, even that work by which the image you lost at the fall is repaired and brought back again—the empire of sin within you is overthrown—the subjection of your hearts to what is visible and earthly is exchanged for the power of the unseen world over its every affection—and you are filled with such a faith, and such a love, and such a superiority to perishable things, as will shed a glory over the whole of your daily walk, and give to every

one of your doings the high character of a candidate for eternity.

Christ is offered to all of you for forgiveness. The man who takes Him for this single object must be looking at Him with an eye half-shut upon the revelation He makes of Himself. Look at Him with an open and a steadfast eye, and then I will call you a true believer; and sure I am, that if you do so, you cannot avoid seeing Him in the earnestness of His desire that you should give up all sin, and enter from this moment into all obedience. True, and most true, my brethren, that faith will save you; but it must be a whole faith in a whole Bible. True, and most true, that they who keep the commandments of Jesus shall enter into life; but you are not to shrink from any one of these commandments, or to say, because they are so much above the power of humanity, that you must give up the task of attempting them. True, and most true, that he who trusteth to his obedience as a Saviour, is shifting his confidence from the alone foundation it can rest upon. Christ is your Saviour; and when I call upon you to rejoice in that reconciliation which is through Him, I call upon you not to leave Him for a single moment, when you engage in the work of doing those things which if left undone, will exclude us from the kingdom of heaven. Take Him along with you into all your services. Let this sentiment ever be upon you,—What I am now doing I may do in my own strength to the satisfaction of man; but I must have the power of Christ resting upon the performance, if I wish to do it in the way that is acceptable to God. Let this be your habitual sentiment, and then the supposed opposition between faith and works vanishes into nothing. The life of a believer is made up of good works; and faith is the animating and the power-working principle of every one of them. The Spirit of Christ actuates and sustains the whole course of your obedience. You walk not away from Him, but, in the language of the text, you "walk in him;" and as there is not one of your doings in which He does not feel a concern, and prescribe for you a

duty, so there is not one of them in which His grace is not in readiness to put the right principle into your heart, and to bring it out into your conduct, and to make your walk accord with your profession, so as to let the world see upon you without, the power and the efficacy of the sentiment within; and thus, while Christ has the whole merit of your forgiveness, he has also the whole merit of your sanctification; and the humble and deeply-felt consciousness of "Nevertheless not me, but the grace of God that is in me," restores to Jesus Christ all the credit and all the glory which belong to Him, by making Him your only, and your perfect, and your entire, and your altogether Saviour.

Choose Him, then, my brethren, choose Him as the Captain of your salvation. Let Him enter into your hearts by faith, and let Him dwell continually there. Cultivate a daily intercourse and a growing acquaintance with Him. O, you are in safe company, indeed, when your fellowship is with Him? The shield of His protecting mediatorship is ever between you and the justice of God; and out of His fullness there goeth a constant stream, to nourish, and to animate, and to strengthen every believer. Why should the shifting of human instruments so oppress and so discourage you, when He is your willing friend; when He is ever present, and is at all times in readiness; when He, the same to-day, yesterday, and for ever is to be met with in every place; and while His disciples here, giving way to the power of sight, are sorrowful, and in great heaviness, because they are to move at a distance from one another, He, my brethren has His eye upon all neighborhoods and all countries, and will at length gather His disciples into one eternal family? With such a Master let us quit ourselves like men. With the magnificence of eternity before us, let time, with all its fluctuations, dwindle into its own littleness. If God is pleased to spare me, I trust I shall often meet with you in person, even on this side of the grave; but if not, let us often meet in prayer at the mercy-seat of God. While we occupy different places on earth, let our mutual intercessions for each other go to one place

in heaven. Let the Saviour put our supplications into one censer; and be assured, my brethren, that after the dear and the much-loved scenery of this peaceful vale has disappeared from my eye, the people who live in it shall retain a warm and an ever-during place in my memory;—and this mortal body must be stretched on the bed of death, ere the heart which now animates it can resign its exercise of longing after you, and praying for you, that you may so receive Christ Jesus, and so walk in Him, and so hold fast the things you have gotten, and so prove that the labor I have had amongst you has not been in vain; that when the sound of the last trumpet awakens us, these eyes which are now bathed in tears may open upon a scene of eternal blessedness, and we, my brethren, whom the providence of God has withdrawn for a little while from one another, may on that day be found side by side at the right hand of the everlasting throne.

SERMON XVII.

[In September, 1815, a series of sermons was preached in the Tron Church, Glasgow, on the text, Luke i. 74. One of them, devoted to the drawing out of the distinction between the fear of terror and the fear of reverence, was molded afterwards into the form in which it is presented in Dr. Chalmers' Works, vol. x. p. 195. The substance of the succeeding sermon is given in the discourse which follows.]

LUKE I. 74.

"That he would grant unto us, that we, being delivered out of the hand of our enemies, might serve him without fear."

We have already spoken of that fear which has God for its direct and personal object, and regarding which the Bible appears to exhibit a set of contradictory passages that we have endeavored to reconcile. But there is another fear distinct from that which we entertain towards God as a person, though it stands connected with one of the fixed and irreversible ordinations of His government—even that by which the holiness of man in time is made indispensable to his happiness in eternity. This must be admitted by a Christian disciple, even after he, by the faith of the gospel, has entered into reconciliation with God, and so exchanged the fear of terror for the fear of reverence. There is a host of scriptural testimonies to the necessity of holiness, which no fair inquirer into the truth as it is in Jesus can possibly withstand; and indeed the very same faith in the general veracity of the Bible which leads to the assurance of an efficacy in the blood of Jesus to deliver from the punishment of sin, leads co-ordinately to the assurance that without deliverance also from the power of sin there is no meetness for heaven, and can be no entrance into the delight or the glory of its everlasting habitations. Now the fear is lest we should fall short of this heaven just by falling short

of this holiness—a fear which remains, and ought to remain with you, even after having accepted of Christ as your Saviour. "Let us therefore fear," says the apostle, "lest a promise being left us of entering into His rest any of you should seem to come short of it." He states before what the grounds were of such an apprehension. One of them is an evil heart—"Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God." Another of them is the insidious power of sin—"Lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin." And in support of this very lesson of heedfulness and fear he quotes in another place the instances of those who, after having performed to all appearance their great and initiatory act of reconciliation with God, fell away, and were destroyed of Him. They, he tells us, who were baptized unto Moses, and ate and drank of that spiritual Rock, that was Christ—even with those of them who suffered themselves to be overcome by temptation, God was not well-pleased, and overthrew them in the wilderness. And these things are written for our admonition—for in like manner still may we be overthrown; "wherefore," he concludes, "let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."

Now the things which move us, and which should move us to fear, are the likelihoods of such a fall whereby we are surrounded. All nature and experience might well minister to our apprehensions upon this subject. Did we but think of our hearts, and of their constant and cleaving ungodliness—did we look back upon our history, and reflect how little it has been guided by the principle, or adorned by the fruits of new obedience—did we take account of our affections, and of their still abiding earthliness, so like unto that carnality wherewith the Bible has associated death—did we even take account of our doings, according to which we shall either be received or rejected at the judgment-seat of Christ—did we but estimate aright our constitutional facilities to what is evil, our leaden, our lethargic apathy to what is good—did we make sound and true computation

of the strength of our enemies, the sinful tempers and passions and sensualities which are within, meeting at every turn their appropriate objects from without, and plied, most closely and urgently plied on all hands by the importunities of a besetting world—did we only take a just cognizance of these things, then by the very prevalence of sight and of sense over faith, we, if at all in earnest about the matter, must feel alarmed by the fearful chances of an arrest and an overthrow on that course of progressive holiness which is the alone way whereby we can make good our escape from the horrors of an undone eternity. Were we, in the language of Zacharias, wholly delivered from the hands of those enemies, then might we serve God *without* fear in righteousness and holiness before him all the days of our life; but just because all our life long we are encompassed by those enemies, the apostle Paul tells us to "work out our salvation *with* fear and trembling;" and just because while we sojourn in the flesh they do continue to solicit and to annoy us, the apostle Peter tells us to "pass the time of our sojourning here *in* fear."

Now, it may help us to resolve this apparent contrariety if we compare two passages in the life of the last mentioned apostle, and from which we shall determine, I think, what the fear is which we ought to cast away, and what the fear which we ought to cherish and retain. Peter was, upon one occasion, asked by our Saviour to come to Him as He walked upon the sea. He obeyed; but no sooner did he venture himself upon the water than his heart gave way. He knew that he could not walk there in his own strength, and that unless buoyed up by a miraculous power he would sink to the bottom and perish. Now faith in the miraculous power of Him whom he had every reason to trust was the very thing which should have supported his intrepidity; but this faith he wanted, and so he was afraid, and drew this rebuke upon himself—"O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" Here Peter sinned in that he feared, because his was at this time a fear opposed to faith in the power and kindness of the Saviour.

Go now to another passage of his life—when he strongly asserted, in the hearing of his Master, that he never would deny Him—confident that though all the rest of the disciples should be baffled and give way, he would meet the coming temptation like a man, and that like a man he would conquer it. Now, on what ground did he feel a confidence so fearless? Did he calculate on strength from his Master to support him? No! had he rested his confidence on this he would not have disgraced himself; but he evidently spoke in the tone of a man who counted on his own strength—of a man conscious that within him there was a firmness of principle altogether competent of itself for the struggle that was approaching. It had been well if, looking to the power and promise of the Saviour, he had felt fearless; but all the fearlessness that he felt was on looking to himself and to the energy of his own purposes—and therefore it was that as in the former instance he sinned in having feared, so in the present instance he sinned in having not feared. Had he been more distrustful of himself, more aware of the inadequacy of his own strength to meet the coming trial and to conquer it, he would have feared, and feared on the right ground. Had this fear clothed him with humility, and caused him to transfer his dependence from himself unto the Saviour, he would have been courageous, and courageous on the right ground—and it were a confidence that would not have been put to shame, for then would he have been in the way of the promise—that the God who resisteth the proud giveth grace unto the humble.

The history of this apostle after the resurrection illustrates the matter still more. It is quite palpable that he then underwent a great moral transformation, and conducted himself with a decision and an energy before unknown to him—preaching the word with all boldness, and, with only one recorded exception, doing the whole work of an apostle in a way the most firm and unfaltering—insomuch that faithful to his dangerous commission, he kept by it in the face of imprisonments and persecutions, and at length closed an honorable life by the agonies of a painful martyrdom.

Now, what was it that caused this revolution? What new and better principle was that which seems now to have sustained him? Be assured that it consisted in his now fearing on the right ground, and in his having faith on the right ground. He feared when and where it was proper; and he feared not, when and where it was proper. When, on looking to the trials that beset or that awaited him, he measured them with his own strength, then he had the fear—when he measured them with the strength of the Lord Jesus, then he had the faith. In a word, he put no confidence in himself, knowing that in himself, that is, in his flesh, there dwelt no good thing—he put all his confidence in the Saviour, knowing that he could do all things through Christ strengthening him. And so the confidence which he expressed after the resurrection differed exceedingly from the confidence which he felt before it. "Think not," he said, after the achievement of a wondrous miracle, "that by our own power or holiness we have done this thing; it is in the name of Christ, and by faith in His name, and through the faith which is by Him, that we have been enabled to do this thing in the presence of you all."

Now, this mixture of fear in reference to the weakness of one's self, and of faith in reference to the power and promise of God, both acting contemporaneously together, might appear a mystery in your eyes. You may feel a difficulty in conceiving what the posture of the mind can be when thus acted upon—or how it is that two principles so opposite in their nature should exist in the heart at the same time, and bear at once upon the mechanism of the human spirit. At first sight it may not be clear to you by what sort of moral dynamics, or by what composition of forces it is that the mind, when thus under two impulses, betakes itself to the one right and determinate path. You must admit the great practical importance of the question, affecting as it does the whole habit and history of a believer—and you will therefore excuse us if, in our attempts at explicitness, we shall not be disdainful even of the very homeliest illustrations.

Our first illustration is taken from infancy—when the child makes its first attempts to walk. Here the two principles are working together at the same moment—first, a fearfulness, in virtue of which it will not let go the hold of its nurse's hand; and secondly, a confidence, that while keeping its hold firmly it will be supported and in safety during its whole adventure across the floor. Fear on the one hand, and faith on the other, are both in operation, and both necessary. Extinguish the principle of fear altogether, and the child committing itself too early to its own strength, will inevitably fall. Extinguish the principle of faith altogether, and the child having no confidence even in the effectual support held out by the hands of its attendant, might never attempt the exercise of walking, and so remain in impotency all its days. And thus the mingled operation of these two principles so far from being that recondite, that unpractical thing which people alike unobservant of the Bible and of human nature regard it to be, is a thing of current and most obvious exemplification in the experience of every family.

Should our second illustration be now deemed utterly superfluous, and perhaps even nauseated, as you would the insipidity of any overdone excess—we must still plead the magnitude of the lesson, and our urgent feeling of that magnitude. I may be conscious of inability to swim across a river, and nevertheless commit myself fearlessly to its waters, should a rope be handed out to me from the vessel that is passing over it. Here, too, we have the joint operation of both principles:—Fear in reference to my own power of self support, restrains me from letting go my hold—faith in the strength and tightness of the rope, gives me a feeling of perfect security while I retain my hold. Both principles, however opposite in their nature, incline me to the one thing of keeping firmly and constantly by the rope. Were I confident that I had no need of it, I might fling it indignantly away from me, and should my confidence be presumption, I might sink to the bottom and perish. But I fear, and therefore keep by it as my only

dependence. Were I fearful of the rope's strength, and trembled lest when I took my hold of it, it should break or separate from the vessel, I might refuse its aid, and rather keep my hands in the exercise of swimming. Give me the right fear—that is a fearful sense of my own weakness and inability to swim; and the right faith—that is a faith in the perfect security of the rope which I hold by; and these principles, so far from contravening each other, do in fact conspire to the one result of making me cleave with full purpose of heart to that only support by which I can be carried fearlessly through the river, and brought in safety to the other side of it.

And it is just by such a fear and by such a faith that we make our way into heaven across the troubled sea of this world. These two are not distracting forces which draw in opposite ways. The one verily shuts up into the other. It is just when we look abroad upon the adverse influences of sense and of society, and then bethink ourselves of our own utter inadequacy to cope with them—it is when admonished by inward experience of our constant tendency to relinquish all dependence and all desire towards God—it is the frequent obscuration of Him in our own spirits, that sublimed although they may have somewhat been, in hours of stillness and seclusion to the ethereal brightness of the upper regions, yet that ever and anon on our return, whether to the world's business or to the world's companies, they lapse again into earthliness, and grovel there—it is this perpetual finding, that however able to maintain in conduct those equities of action amongst our fellows which belong to the virtue of righteousness, yet that we utterly and throughout every hour of our lives fail in those sanctities of affection towards God which constitute the virtue of holiness—these are the experiences which must at length school every honest inquirer into an utter fearfulness of himself, a distrust, a most warrantable and well-founded distrust in all the resources of his own strength and of his own wisdom. It is this often-tried and as often ascertained deficiency of nature, which reconciles him to the doctrine

of a grace that might put strength into nature for the whole work and warfare of obedience. Looking to the impotency of the one, there is fear; looking to the sufficiency of the other, there is faith. Both are salutary. In virtue of the first, he has a perpetual distrust in himself; in virtue of the second, he has a perpetual dependence on the Lord Jesus. There is no conflict between these feelings—they work, as it were, to one another's hands. The movement to which they give rise is first an export of prayer from the soul to heaven's sanctuary; and secondly, an import of power from heaven's sanctuary into the soul. It is this habitual sense of weakness which excites to habitual prayer—it is this habitual prayer which brings down the habitual supplies of strength and of grace for all services. The man works mightily because God works in him mightily. He realizes the great paradox of the Christian life, that when he is weak then he is strong—that when deepest in humility he is borne most steadfastly upward and onward along the heights of an angelic sacredness.

These views are in full harmony with Scripture; and did we but take along with us what that is which we should feel fear about, and again, what that is which we should put faith in, we could be at no loss to understand either how the psalmist could mix trembling with his mirth, or how the apostle could be always sorrowful yet always rejoicing. "When I said, my foot slippeth," saith David, "thy mercy, O Lord, held me up." On looking to one quarter, even to that of sense and of nature, we might well tremble before those adverse influences by which the heart of man is wholly secularized, and his history becomes that of an earthly, carnal, and alienated creature. On looking to the other quarter, even to that where the fullness of grace is treasured up, and whence it issues forth on the praying and the watching and the working disciple—it might well rejoice in those precious influences from heaven by which the heart of man is impregnated with its own sacredness, and his history becomes that of a prosperous aspirant after its glory and immortality and honor. Could he, without any

hold on the support that is above him, make his own way on the ascent of a progressive holiness, then he need not tremble; or even were it quite natural for him to keep that hold at all times, then might he persist in a sort of unbroken and undisturbed security of heart, while the temptations of life play idly around him. But, in point of truth, there is a constant aptitude to let go the hold, and every intelligent Christian is conscious thereof, and so he is kept, and that perpetually, on the alert and the alarm—fearful, on the one hand, lest he should quit his dependence, and confident, on the other, that so long as he retains it he is safe. You can imagine the light and evidence wherewith the sacred volume stands forth to the eye of a believer, when made to observe how precisely the descriptions of the Bible accord with all the developments of an experience so very peculiar. When called upon to fear—as in the first verse of the fourth chapter of the Hebrews—lest he should come short of the promised rest, he knows well what that is which should make him afraid. But this very fear, founded on a distrust of his own powers, shuts him up unto another dependence—and when called upon in the last verse of the same chapter, to come boldly to the throne of grace, that he may find grace to help him in the time of need, he knows well what that is which should make him courageous. This delicate alternation between the two feelings, so often adverted to in the Bible, and so accurately reflected in the personal history of a believer, affords that very correspondence between the tablet of human nature on the one hand, and the tablet of revelation on the other, which warrants a still more intimate conviction than before of God being the common author or architect of both. Meanwhile, too, he practices the lesson of serving God both without fear and with fear—without fear on the calculation that he makes of God's promises—with fear on the calculation he makes of his own powers. The sense of his own helplessness will make him fearful of depending upon it. The sense of God's truth in the promises will make him faithful in depending upon it. The faith and the fear are embodied by him

into one act of obedience, even as within the limits of a single verse they have been embodied by the apostle into one precept. He tells the Gentiles not to boast themselves against the children of Israel;—and why? because it was by faith only that they stood—"And be not therefore," he says, "high-minded, but fear." Here, and within the compass of one utterance, the right fear and the right faith are both contemporaneously pressed upon them. The right fear would keep them from boasting, allied as it was with the sentiment that although they stood, it was by no power or holiness of their own. The right faith would direct their eye to that fountain of grace which was above them, and whence they drew those supplies of light and of strength, which from the unbelieving Jews had been withholden, and as they looked to that God who alone made them to differ, they would not be high-minded.

But the most complete scriptural illustration of this doctrine which can be given, is from that celebrated passage where the apostle tells his converts to work out their own salvation with fear and trembling, because it is God that worketh in them both to will and to do of His good pleasure. It is conceivable how a man should both will aright and work aright in virtue of an influence from heaven, and how, to obtain this influence, a prayer should arise from the heart, and a power should come down both upon the heart and upon the hand for all the services of a vigorous and an active obedience. But why should there be a fear or trembling in this process? The fear is lest, among the besetting urgencies of sense and of nature, we should be tempted to forget God, and so He should withdraw His helping hand from us. The fear is lest, in the confidence of nature, we should go forth against the adverse influences by which we are surrounded, and so be overcome. The fear is lest we should lose our hold of God, and so He, quitting His hold of us, and abandoning us to our own unaided impotency, should leave us to the disgrace and the ruin of a fatal overthrow. The fear is lest, not praying as we ought, we should be deprived of the needful element for

right and acceptable performance; and, most important of all, the fear is lest, not performing as we ought, we should provoke God to withhold His answers of grace and of graciousness from our prayers. It is this last which harmonizes man's utmost activity with man's utmost dependence. This is the state of it: he does all that he can with the strength which he now has, and he looks to God for that strength being kept up and extended. He knows that if he do not work up to the power which is at present in him, that power will not be added to, and, what is more, that even such as it is, it may be withdrawn. He knows that if he do not trade with all diligence on the actual stock of grace, this stock will be actually diminished. Whatever, therefore, in the way of duty or of service, his hand findeth to do, he doeth it with all his existing might, lest deserted in wrath by the sustaining might of God, he should not only be arrested in his progress towards the strength and the stature of a more advanced Christianity, but should decline into the utter impotency of one who is altogether without grace and without godliness. It is precisely because God worketh in him to will and to do of his good pleasure, that he fears lest that good pleasure should be forfeited in the time that is to come by his careless and remiss improvement of all which it has done for him in the time that now is. The precise reason why so strenuous and so busy and so much on the alert in stirring up and putting to its practical use the gift that is in him, is, that if he do not he will receive no more gifts, and what he has will be taken away. A more plain and also more powerful incitement to all diligence, and that throughout every single instant of his course, cannot well be conceived than that if he do not at this instant work to the uttermost of that ability wherewith the Spirit has now invested him, the Spirit will be grieved, and may, on the very next instant, abandon him to his own unsupported feebleness. The relation between the hand that works and the hand by which it is strengthened, furnishes the very strongest, and at the same time most intelligible motive to steady, faithful, and enduring obedience.

The man works out his salvation upon the strength of what God has wrought into him; and he does it with fear and trembling, just because most fearfully and tremblingly alive to the thought, that if he does not, God may cease working in him to will any more or to do any more. The doctrine of grace, thus understood, so far from acting as an extinguisher upon human activity, is in truth the very best excitement to it. This dependence between the busy exercise of all your present graces and the supply of new, is the fittest possible tenure on the part of God whereby to hold man to his most constant, most careful, most vigilant obedience. It is felt that the only way of obtaining enlargement and vigor for future services, is to acquit one's self to the uttermost of his present strength of all his present services; and that thus, and thus alone, he can step by step work his ascending way to a higher and a higher status in practical Christianity. We are aware of the reproach that has been cast on the doctrine of the Spirit's influences; but we trust it will be seen from these views, however imperfectly given, that he who labors in all the present might given, and looks for more, instead of living in the mystic state of an indolent and expectant quietism, he of all other men is the most awake to every call of duty—the most painstaking and arduous in every performance of it.

There is nothing in that mercy which descends upon us from heaven to supersede the activities of men upon earth. Instead of superseding, its very design is to stimulate these activities. When it works in us, its precise outgoing is just to set us working. Had it operated by an outward or physical constraint upon the hand, then might it only have worked on us to do. But it operates on the inner man, and so as to gain the consent of the heart; and accordingly works in us both to will and to do. It acts in truth by the influence of moral suasion, and addresses itself to the various parts and principles of our moral nature. The man instead of being driven by a force from without, is really and in substance under the government of his own feelings—but these are feelings capable it would appear of being re-

fined and elevated by the influence of that supreme virtue which is above us, even as we experimentally know that they are capable of being refined and elevated by the influence of that social virtue which beams upon us from the companionship of a good and well-principled society around us. At all events, the thing is misunderstood if you conceive of him who has been quickened into action by a touch from the upper sanctuary, that he is therefore set aside from the exertion of his own powers, and the guidance or the control of his own purposes. The visitation, in fact, is upon the inward powers and sensibilities, not of a dead but of a living mechanism, and the effect of it is not to overbear any of the proper functions of the man, but to set all his powers and purposes and inward principles in action. Accordingly, in our text, the effect of God's having visited and redeemed His people, is that His people serve Him. Upholden though they be, and led although they be by the hand stretched forth upon them from heaven, it is a hand not of impulse upon matter but of application to mind, and which acts on that mind in sweetest unison with all its faculties, insomuch that these children of grace, instead of idly waiting in the anticipation of what is to come, are most strenuously and laboriously working under the ascendency of a moral force that is present, and which bears upon the heart as well as on the hand. We deceive ourselves then if we think that under the economy of the Gospel we are exempted from the assiduities of service; and although we shall never move aright unless breathed upon by an influence from above, yet he only has indeed partaken of that influence who, in practical deference to the authority of God as his Master, holds forth in the history of his life the aspect of a willing and a doing and a stirring and a painstaking obedience.

SERMON XVIII.

[Preached at Glasgow, October 29, 1815.]

II. CORINTHIANS VI. 17, 18.

"Wherefore, come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."

You will observe that Paul in these verses is addressing a number of professed Christians, who were surrounded with the allurements of idolatry. There was a power of temptation in these allurements greater than they have ever thought of to whom the profligacies of the pagan worship are unknown; but the apostle, whose converts lived in the midst of them, was aware of the constant vigilance they would have to maintain among the constant opportunities and solicitations which beset them in every quarter. He watched over them with a godly jealousy. He feared for them even to painfulness. His apprehension was that he would again lose them; and, aware of the danger that lay even in their most distant approaches to the objects of that enticing ritual, he insists on a clean and total separation. It is under a feeling of the hazard to which they were exposed that he calls upon them, in a former epistle, to beware of security: "Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall." It is with a reference to the very same subject that he calls upon them to beware also of a despairing sense of helplessness, under the force of these surrounding temptations. He commits them to the faithfulness of God. "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to men; but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able

to bear it." And having thus put them into the right attitude for resisting temptation, or, in other words, having on the one hand given them the right fear, that is, a fear of themselves, in virtue of which they would take heed—and the right faith, that is, faith in God, in virtue of which they would receive the fulfillment of His promises—he makes the whole to bear on the great practical object that he had in his eye, and proves the deep impression of his mind on the subject of idolatry and of its dangers, when, after furnishing them with the right answer, and putting them into the right attitude of resistance, he winds up the whole argument by saying, Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry.

But how can such a lesson as this be made to bear upon the professing Christians of the present day? Just by making idolatry what, spiritually and substantially speaking, it really is, giving the desires of the heart to any one object which can seduce it from the love of God. If any one thing be more loved than He, that one thing is an idol. The heart which followeth after its uncleanness is engaged in the worship of an idol. The man whose heart is in his wealth, and not in the living God, is virtually as much an idolater as if he made an image of his gold, and fell down on his knees to an idol. The man of the present day, who, the slave of ungovernable desire, indulges in the abomination of licentiousness, ranks, in the spiritual estimation of Heaven, with the bacchanalian of old, who personified pleasure, and made an image with his hands to represent the image of his fancy, and shared in all the mysteries which were thrown around the service of the idol. Even the good-humored and convivial man, whose ruling enjoyment is his table, and whom the world can charge with no other species of profligacy—had he been one of Paul's converts, Paul would have wept over him, and charged him with making a god of his enjoyment, and the mind of the holy apostle would have felt his apostasy even to the bitterness of tears, and have told it even weeping that he had become an enemy of the Cross of Christ, and had relapsed from the

worship of the one God to the worship of an idol. Ye purer and gentler of our kind, who love to surround yourselves with all the elegancies which wealth can purchase, I will not say, when I enter your apartments and survey the tastefulness and the splendor which adorn them, that you have done that which is unlawful, but I think that, had Paul looked at the costly exhibition, he would have said, with all the delicacy and discernment which belonged to him, that though all things be lawful, yet all things are not expedient; and if the desire of the eye or the pride of life, which are opposite to the love of the Father, be the ruling principle within you, then in every act of extravagance at the shrine of fashion do I recognize an offering of idolatry—an act of graceful adoration before the painted magnificence and the high-wrought drapery of an idol. But the work of illustration is endless. Every one creature that is more loved than the Creator is an idol. If any one thing which He has formed occupy the place in our hearts which belongs to Him who formed all things, that one thing is an idol. Oh! how widely does such a principle as this spread around the charge of rebellion among all the classes and characters of society. How broadly it stamps upon the face of the world the legible expression of a world lying in wickedness. When we see every man giving himself up to his own peculiar idolatry, how it realizes the description of the prophet, that we have turned every one to his own way; and surely, when, under all the vanities of selfish indulgence—from all the grossness of profligacy to all the elegance of refinement, we can detect the one, and the universal tendency of forgetfulness of God, we cannot fail to acknowledge that the world of sense which is around us is one mighty theater of idolatry; that on every side of us idols meet us and ply us with their temptations; that they have stolen our affections from God as entirely as the idols of Corinth seduced the worshipers of that abandoned city from the true God of heaven and of earth; and that, therefore, the call of the apostle is unto us as well as unto them, when he tells us of God claiming the honor that is due unto His

name, and recalling His wandering creatures to their allegiance, and bidding them give up their idols, saying, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you, saith the Lord."

Let me take each of these clauses in the order in which they stand, and endeavor practically to apply them to the men of the present day.

"Come out from among them."—A plain enough direction, if you conceive a man standing in one of the temples of idolatry. It is just telling him to turn his back upon the idols, and to walk away from them; but if you take in the next clause of the apostle's advice, "be ye separate," you connect with the act of leaving these idols the purpose of never returning to them. My object in going away is to keep away. With the individual act of the time that is present there is also the general determination, which, if persisted in, carries an authority over my conduct in all time coming. Obedience to the direction, "Come out from among them," may be performed by a man who, though he forbears one act of idolatry, intends no renunciation of the habits of idolatry. Obedience to the direction of—Come out from among them, and be ye separate, involves in it not merely an act of refusal to join in the service of idols, but it makes the one act the commencement of a purposed course. It is by the control of the mind over the body that the one performance of moving away from an idolatrous temple is accomplished; but the mind can look forward to futurity, and by a present act of volition it can exert a control over the movements of futurity. A purpose may be suggested in a moment; it may be deliberated upon and formed in less than an hour. It may be so matured by the power of reflection sitting in authority over the great questions of duty and interest, as to obtain a vested and decisive establishment over the mind in a single day. In another day it may compel the outer man to an act of obedience, and this may be followed by another, and the purpose may gather new strength from every new and successful exertion of sovereignty, and it may be getting constant additions

to its practical ascendency over the whole man, and thus from the suggestion of a single moment there may arise, as from a starting-point, an emanating influence which gives a new direction to his doings, and imparts a new color to the whole train of his history.

This gives an importance to the business of the pulpit which, to him who fills it, is enough to humble and to overwhelm him. The thousand individuals he stands among, if they remain what nature made them, have turned every one of them to his own way, and each is in full pursuit of his own fancied idolatry. Oh! how shall he shape the suggestion that is to bear with effect on all or on any of them; that is, to arrest the currency of nature, and to turn these wanderers unto God. Oh! there is an obstinacy of corruption amongst us which mocks the impotency of human arguments; a spell in the enchantments of sense and of time which no charm of eloquence can dissolve; a tyranny in the idols of the world against which all the demonstrations of wisdom and all the entreaties of human tenderness have no more effect than the lispings of infancy. A minister has no ground to hope for fruit from his exertions until in himself he has no hope; until he has learned to put no faith in the point and energy of sentences; until he feel that a man may be mighty to compel the attention, and mighty to regale the imagination, and mighty to silence the gainsayers, and yet not mighty to the pulling down of strongholds. Oh! there is a power of resistance in the alienated children of this world which is beyond every power that accomplished or educated nature can bring to bear upon it; and it is not till he throw himself in humble dependence on his great Master, who alone can subdue all things unto Himself, that he need expect to be the honored instrument of breaking down the infatuation which chains every brother of the species in the most helpless and degrading idolatry.

But to give these two clauses of "Come out from among them," and "be ye separate," their general application, I would observe, in the first place, that the renunciation you are called upon to perform is not of this one or of that other

idol, but of all idols. It is to come out from among *them*. There is not one of them in the service of which you do not trespass on some of the commandments; and there is not one of them the love of which does not depose God from that supremacy over your affections which belongs to Him. There is no man living who realizes every species of wickedness in his conduct, or who enthrones every idol seducing him to wickedness in his heart. You may not serve many gods; but if you serve one god, and he be not the true God of heaven and of earth, to Him you are a rebel, and the full guilt of rebellion lies upon you. Many a generous-hearted youth would not make a sacrifice of integrity to the idol wealth; ay, but he may make an idol of pleasure. Many an elegant scholar would not debase himself by an act of intoxication; ay, but he may make an idol of fame. Many a lover of quietness would not envy the success of another's ambition; ay, but he may make an idol of ease. Each may think his own taste the most respectable, and give the preference to his own idol, but I come in upon them with a claim that sets aside all, and is paramount to all. I bring the demands of another Master to the door of every one of them. I tell them that it is quite in vain to be running each in complacency on his own way, and thinking that he is so much safer and so much better than his neighbors around him. It is precisely because it is his own way that he is wrong. It is a way to which he turns not by the authority of God, but by the desire of his own heart. It may be called a purer, or a more refined, or a more honorable way, but still, if God have no concern in it, what put him in that way but some affection of his own? and that affection being not towards God, is towards an idol. It is just because we have turned every man to his own way, that God looks upon us as wandering from Him, and that before He could recall us back again He had to clear the access between sinners and Himself, by laying upon Christ the iniquities of us all. Oh, no! my brethren, you may have several idols, and give up the service of one of them, but that is not enough; or you may leave one and take to another, but

that will not do either. The God who made you and keeps you can put His hand upon every one of you, and say that you are mine, and whatever you do must be done by my will and to my service. I lay upon you the obligation of doing all things to Him, and ere you can be ready to fulfill this obligation, you must come out from all idols, and be separate from all.

And, again, what is that posture of the mind which is implied in its being separate from idols? It is by nature the subject of many desires, and there is surely no difficulty in conceiving what it is to follow out these desires. There is a bent of the mind which all of us have the familiar experience of, and it is every day exemplified by those thousands and thousands more who crowd the broad way which leadeth to destruction. It is a matter of constant observation how a desire springs in the heart; how, to obtain its accomplishment, a purpose is conceived; how, to execute the purpose, a deed is performed or a line of conduct is prosecuted; and how, throughout every step of this often-repeated process, God is not thought of, and His will is admitted to no share in the deliberations of the inner man, and to no influence upon the visible doings of the outer man. Such a man is wholly given over to the service of idols; he walketh after the counsel of his own heart and in the sight of his own eyes; he cares not for the bidding of God, and he seeks not to know what that bidding is; he just acts as if there were no God, or as if God had no will about any of his doings, or as if the expression of that will had never been revealed to him. Surely, it may well be said of such a man that he has broken loose from God; that he is astray and at a distance from Him; that he has fled from his lawful Master, and attached himself to the service of idols; and be it vanity, or covetousness, or the love of pleasure, or ambition, or, if free from the domineering violence of any one passion, which many an every-day character is, be it merely a calm general attachment to the creature and to the world; be it one, or several, or all of these which form the principles of his constitution—still they are only the different names

of so many idols; and though the service of each of them imparts its own peculiar complexion to its own worshipers, they have all gone out of the way; there is none that seeketh after God; they are idolaters, and have every one of them turned aside to idolatry.

Now let conscience waken within such a man. Let it put the authority of God before him as a rightful authority; let it tell him, "It is not your desire, but the will of God that you should follow;" let it reveal to him the law, with all its high claims and all its unalterable sanctions; and conceive the effect of all this to be, that when the wonted desire springs up in his heart, and to which in time past he gave an unresisting obedience, there should now spring up along with it a something which keeps it in check, and which will not rest till it subordinates the desire to the requirement of God: here is a man separating from an idol—going over from the wrong to the right service, and, if you conceive that the new principle works upon him in all its universality, aims to subordinate not one desire of the heart, but all the desires of it; meets every wish and every affection with the question, But what is the will of God in this matter? urges him with the consideration that, whatever that will be, it ought to be followed; brings the impressive sense of duty and interest to bear upon every case on hand, and thus sets him to struggle it not merely with one idol, but with all idols: here is a man separating from them; here is a man working at the direction of the text, if he has not yet fulfilled it, of "be ye separate;" here is a man under the general conviction that his face has been hitherto turned the wrong way, and that now he must turn him to God; here is a man feeling what he ought to be, and conscious that such he has not hitherto been; here is a man looking towards God, and aspiring after the general object of being what God would have him to be; here is a man before the eye of whose mind there stands presented the will of God as opposed not to this one and to that other transgression, but as opposed to the whole array of his former desires, and pursuits, and affections; here is a man now actuated by a

desire after the single, but most comprehensive object of conformity to this will; here is a man filled with a longing after the one service of God, and a clean and total separation from every other. Whether he has yet obtained that which he longs after, and how he is to accomplish the work of an entire separation, are other questions; but, at all events, here is a man in the incipient attitude of obedience to the direction of my text—an attitude into which he may put himself the moment that it is listened to and understood by him; and if he has not yet accomplished a separation from idols, he is at least in a state of honest readiness for doing all that may be right or necessary to accomplish it.

Now, my brethren, this is the very position I want to put you into. A man may refrain his hand from some evil performance, and not be in this posture; a man may refrain his tongue from some mischievous calumny, and not be in this posture; a man may refrain his feet from some gay and seductive company, and not be in this posture. The mere individual act of turning from these things may be performed by one who has not set himself to the one general act of turning unto God. Now we are repeatedly told in the Bible to make this turn, and there must be some deed of obedience by which it is performed. It is the very deed of obedience which I am now pressing upon you. It is not made up of many particular acts of obedience, but it is one act, which, if duly rendered, would carry every particular act of obedience along with it. No multiplication whatever of particular acts of obedience will make out the one general act of turning unto God. I, who want to live in the free indulgence of my appetites, may put myself under the regimen of a strict temperance, and not make it out; I, who want to take my own pleasure on the Sabbath day, may spend the whole of it in religious observances, and not make it out; I, who want to catch at unfair advantages in business, may become most fearfully and most anxiously scrupulous, and not make it out. Oh, no! my brethren, turning unto God is not a matter eked out and completed by tacking one piece of obedience to another. It is one

movement of the mind, which, if truly taken, subordinates the whole man, and separates him from all idols, and, putting him into the posture of a returning allegiance to God, makes him turn his back upon every one of them. You will not gain this posture by any number whatever of external and positive acts of obedience. It is an attitude of the mind; and it is not till the mind be addressed by the considerations fitted to influence it that it will be put into this attitude. It is not till conscience plies me with the rightful authority of God, and sets before me the enormity of being a rebel to Him, whose I am, and by whom it is that I have any place at all in the creation He has formed, and tells me of the worthlessness of idols, and pursues me with the voice of Turn from them unto God, and give to Him that allegiance which you have so long and so sinfully withheld from Him—it is not till then that I am put into the commanding position of renouncing, in wish and in purpose, the creature for the Creator. A thousand acts of conformity to God's law will not set me on this position; but place me there, and you give me such an aspiring after an entire and unreserved obedience to the whole law as will carry in its train a thousand acts of conformity, and ten thousand more. I wait to know the will of God, and whatever be its requirements, I have the honest purpose of rendering obedience to each and to all of them. It is not by doing this one piece of work, or that other piece of work, or any given number of performances, that I am to make out the character or to earn the reward of God's servant, but, in the language of the psalmist, I say to Him even now, O God, I am Thy servant. I give up every other master —put me to any piece of work Thou art pleased to assign me—to this extent do I profess, and to this extent it is my earnest wish that I should practice—lay all Thy commands upon me, and give me wisdom to understand and strength to perform them all.

But understand well, my brethren, that though there may be many acts of conformity to God's law which are of no account whatever, because not accompanied with a reign-

ing principle of allegiance to God's authority, yet wherever this allegiance exists it will tell, and will tell immediately on the outward obedience. If I see that you are not framing your doings, I say most assuredly that allegiance to God is not formed, and is not forming, and has not even reached the infancy of its first moment in your hearts. Oh! there is much to be gathered from that complaint of the prophet, that they will not frame their doings to turn unto the Lord.* He had called upon them to turn and to turn, but when he saw that there was no change of doing among them, he felt that the work of turning was not even begun to. And there is just as much to be gathered from the text. It presses upon you the general habit, the changed attitude of the soul, in virtue of which it is separate from idols and turned to the true God; but at the same time that it presses this, and even before it presses the general habit upon you, it lays upon you a specific act; it bids you come out from among them; it does not wait for the slow formation of any unseen principle in the inner man, ere it urges you to a visible and external act of obedience on the outer man; it does not encourage any delay or any parrying in this matter. Oh! there is a wonderful freeness and energy in the practical addresses of the Bible! It does not leave you at a loss for want of knowing some clear, distinct, and palpable thing that you may turn your hand to. The idolater who was still lingering in a temple of heathenism, had he been met in person by the apostle, would have gotten from him an advice of far more comprehensive import than that he should not join in the pagan services of that day; he would have been told to separate himself from all idols for all the days of his life; but the mighty mind of the apostle, aiming at the accomplishment of so mighty a change in the heart and habits of an idolater, would still have found time and earnestness for laying upon him a specific act, and he would have laid the full stress of a practical importance on the one individual and immediate performance of leaving the temple in which he was now standing, and, without

* Hosea v. 4.

any squeamish, and slavish, and theorizing scrupulosity about the order of his directions, would he have said to him, in the words of the text, Go out from among them, and be ye separate.

Now, my brethren, I apply this to you and to your idols, and to the acts of sin which you perform in their service. I call upon you to be separated from them all; but I call upon you, also, to refrain from the very first act of sin that you may have opportunity of performing in the service of any one of them. Conceive it possible that this were the moment of such an act. I would not only tell you to separate yourself altogether from this kind of wickedness, but I would tell you to force yourself away, and that actually, from the particular act of wickedness you were now engaged in. Were I by the side of a young friend who was surrounded by dissipated companions, and in the full career of intoxication amongst them, I would tell him to separate himself from the idol of pleasure; but the office of his monitor would be woefully unfinished did I not whisper in his ear, and that with all the energy of alarm, that at this moment he should go out from among them. Were he the member of some unrighteous combination, a partner in some extended system of illicit merchandise, the companion of a brotherhood who practiced their covenanted acts of dishonesty against the interests of the public, I would not let him off with an exhortation of such feeble generality as, Separate thyself from the idol of covetousness, but would press it upon him that without a moment's parrying or delay he should withdraw himself from that fellowship of iniquity, and go out from amongst them. Were he a worshiper at the shrine of fashion, and in that wretched competition of extravagance which has banished from society all the simplicity of kindness; were he to force out a splendor in the eye of his neighbor which pressed upon the means or the conveniences of his family, I would not stop short at telling him to separate himself from the idol of vanity, but I would urge him, in noble defiance to his former associates in expense, and to all their paltry insinuations, that at this

moment he should bid adieu to their heartless parade, and come out from amongst them. I would not satisfy myself with the general direction; I would follow it up with the point of a specific requirement; I would bring it to the touchstone of an instantaneous act of obedience; I would not merely say, Be ye separate, but I would also say, Come out. An entire separation from all idols is the mighty object of a Christian's ambition; but it is an object to which he must move, and if I see no one act of breaking off from his idolatry, I have a right to say of him that he has not moved a single footstep in the way of obedience. One act of withdrawment may be performed by him who falls short of the habit of separation, but the habit of separation will never be reached by him who performs no act of withdrawment. Oh, no! my brethren; you may amuse yourselves all your days with the distant contemplation of the full stature and graceful accomplishments of the perfect man in Christ Jesus, but it is only by growing up unto Him that you will ever reach it; by moving from one degree of grace unto another; by an actual commencement of the course, and a steady perseverance in it. If I have not got you to cease from one act of homage to an idol, I have done nothing. If I have not prevailed upon you to resolve against the very next occasion of sin, I have given all my earnestness to the winds. If I have only wrought in you the conviction that it is your duty to separate from idols, but have not wrought in you the purpose to come out from among them, ay, and that immediately, I feel amongst you all the humiliation of a defeat—I am baffled in my attack upon the power of darkness within you. The lifting up of my voice has not awakened you from the deep spirit of slumber, nor has the word of exhortation which I have sounded in your ears been acknowledged by that Spirit who can alone make the word effectual by giving it the energy of a hammer breaking the rock in pieces. I look around me, and see every symptom of attention engraven upon the countenance and expressed by the attitude of a listening people; but if all this is not accompanied by

the purpose of abandoning the next act of homage you are tempted to render to an idol, under the imposing cover of all that stillness and seriousness which now sit so visibly among you, there is an enmity of heart arrayed against me in all the obstinacy of resistance; I have effected no lodgment in the inner man; and in my attempt to shake you out of the deceitfulness of sin, the enemy who reigns in and who occupies your bosoms has withstood, and he has overcome me.

In the great work of separating from an idol, and turning unto the Lord, there is an immediate movement that I would impress upon your footsteps. They must haste and make no delay to keep the commandments. It is right that the object of an entire renunciation should be fully in your eye, but this object will never be attained unless the work of renunciation is begun to, and I lay it upon you to begin it immediately. It is right for you to understand, that you do nothing to the purpose unless it be done in the spirit of a general desire to do everything unto the Lord; but what signifies the purity of the motive that you should wish to do everything, if in deed and in performance you have not done anything, and are not prepared to do the very next thing which time and opportunity bring round to you? In the act of turning to the Lord, you must frame your doings, and every moment of delay you incur in the doing of this one and that other prescribed thing, you are keeping separate from Him and clinging in service and in affection to one or more of your idols. I call upon you to break loose from every one of them; and if you do so, you will at this very instant emerge into the field of active obedience. You will go home, and put their services and their society away from you; you will forbear the wonted homage that you have been daily and hourly rendering them. If hitherto you have worshiped the idol of sensual pleasure, your very next feast will be a feast of temperance. If hitherto you have made an offering of truth to the idol of gain, your very next bargain will be a bargain of integrity. If hitherto you have made the offering of a sinful compliance to the

idol of popularity among your profligate companions, your very next meeting with them will be signalized by an act of virtuous independence. I admit of no parrying in this matter. I will not be satisfied with the faint generality of a wish that you should be separate, but I insist on the wish being turned into business immediately, and evincing its strength and its reality by your coming out now from among them. I want to break up this dream of indolence; I want to blow in pieces every delusion which prolongs it. Whatever the employment of mind be which keeps you from embarking in the career of immediate exertion, I pronounce it to be wrong. Should it even be the hard knot of some doctrinal difficulty which shortens you and binds you up from putting forth an instant activity in this matter, I would cut it through, and tear it asunder as a spell of infatuation. Ah! my brethren, it is not enough that you be told how there must be an entire separation from idols ere you reach that place where nothing unclean and unholy ever enters. The hour of your departure from this world looks a distant futurity, and you put it far away from you; but I tell you that on this hour you must begin the work of separation; and knowing that delay is ruin, and how artful are the pleadings of the soul for a little more sleep and a little more slumber, I ply your consciences with the energy of an immediate call, and lift in your present hearing the solemn announcement that now, even now, you must come out from amongst them.

SERMON XIX.

[Preached in the Tron Church at the first Sacrament dispensed by Dr. Chalmers in Glasgow, 5th November, 1815.]

II CORINTHIANS VI. 17, 18.

"Wherefore, come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."

The sinner who turns with his whole heart and whole soul to God comes to be separate from all idols. This is the object of his unceasing attempts and aspirations—this is the purpose by which he is actuated. The commencement of this purpose is marked by his coming from the service of idolatry, and at this time he comes out from among them. The continuance of this purpose is marked by his keeping from the service of the idolatry, and then it is that he refrains his hand from touching the unclean thing. He has come out from among them, and he will not go back again; and lest he should be allured, he refrains from the most distant approaches that may tempt his return. He will not even venture upon the borders of temptation—he will not even so much as touch the unclean thing. He dreads the power of seduction that lies even in the very outworks of idolatry, and he keeps studiously aloof from them. If temptation meet him, whether he will or not, he must grapple with it; but if he has a choice in the matter, he would rather fly from it. This is the safe and the scriptural way of managing every temptation—when it is in your power, keep without its reach. If your seducing companions have still a power of seduction over you, shun, if possible, their presence. If a luxurious entertainment has still a power of oversetting your purposes of control,

save yourself by a timely withdrawment, or keep altogether away from it. If an alluring object present itself before you, turn away your eyes from viewing vanity. Your safety lies in caution. It will be long, and very long, my refraining friends, ere you should let down that vigilance which distrust and conscious weakness ought to inspire. You have come out from among the idolatries of your former days, have you?—well, you will find the work of keeping out from them a work of great watchfulness. You will need to have all your eyes about you, for you are surrounded with images of deceit which would light up your old affections, and bear you back again into the old service. Oh! it is wise to be suspicious of yourself and fearful of your own firmness. Go not willfully to commit a vessel so frail to the rude shock of contending temptations, and keep your presence from the service of idolatry, and from all that would seduce you to the service.

But to touch not the unclean thing is not a mere act and exercise of the body—it is a precept that may be addressed to the mind, and to the management of its thoughts and affections. Remove your mind from the contact of every unlawful object that would steal upon its desires and tempt it to purposes of sin. Should an unhallowed thought offer to intrude itself, and kindle up any wayward affections, rebuke it from the inner chamber of the soul. Should the temptings of an unfair speculation kindle up any desires of covetousness, spurn it away from you. Should some gay and earthly vision of futurity offer to mislead your fancy, and bind it in captive attachment to the world you had abandoned, let the great and commanding realities of an eternal inheritance chase the hollow deceitfulness from your bosom. Keep your heart with all diligence. It is not safe to let it linger on the mountains of vanity. It is not right to commit it to the hazard which it is in your power to fly from, or wantonly expose it to the temptations which you are commanded to pray against. Its tendencies are too much away from God, and too much directed to the creature, to be lightly tampered with; and it is only when you

renounce the idolatries of the creature, and keep yourself separate from it, and harbor not the temptations which would draw you back to it, that God will receive you.

Before I proceed to the next clause, let me advert to one mischievous effect which the wordy and lengthened illustrations of a preacher may give rise to. He takes up one or two verses of the Bible, and he breaks them down into separate pieces, and he bestows his several paragraphs upon each of them, and he leads his hearers to look upon each as furnishing a distinct topic of remark and contemplation, when, in fact, the whole impression of the whole verse should be all in his mind together, and should give a force and a direction to every one of its clauses. As to the two verses which I have now submitted to you, by one breath of utterance I can pour the whole of it into the ear of a hearer—by one glance of the eye it can be all taken up into the mind of a reader—in a single moment its entire meaning may have taken possession of the heart, so that with the act of obedience to the first clause, "Come out from among them," there may exist at the same time an earnest desire after the fulfillment of the second clause, "Be ye separate," and a firm purpose of carrying the third clause into execution, "Touch not the unclean thing;" and the joyful encouragement which lies in the fourth clause, "I will receive you," giving movement to the very first steps of obedience, and cheering you through all its successive stages; and the blessed assurance of the last clause, "I will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty," telling upon you at the very outset of your new career, and beginning to obtain the earnest of its full and farther accomplishment with your very first attempts to seek God, if haply you might find Him—for He sees you afar off, even as the father saw his prodigal son, and He hears the very earliest of your cries after Him, and the prayer of "Turn me, and I shall be turned," lifted up from the very depths of enslavement, is not disregarded by Him; and it is strength from Him put into you that gives you the power of coming out from idols,

and kept up in you that gives you power of maintaining a continual separation from idols, and dealt out to you in every hour of need and of temptation that gives you the power of resisting, and fleeing, and touching not what is unclean; and thus with the promises in your eye at the very outset, you have also at the very outset a beginning experience of their accomplishment, and God, receiving you into friendship, hands out to you larger and larger supplies of strength for progressive obedience, and holding Himself out as an offered Father—which He does at this moment to one and to all of you—He follows up your very first answer to His call, Come out from among them, with larger and larger supplies of the Spirit of adoption—you grow in the joyful confidence of being His sons and daughters as you grow in other things—the promise of being a Father to you tells upon your faith at the very first utterance of the exhortation; and as you come on in the exercise of filial obedience and filial affection, the alliance between you and God is begun with the very first act of turning to Him, and the very first expression you give of so turning by some act of obedience—as you persevere the alliance is cultivated and made closer—and thus it is that the fellowship between God and His strayed children is begun and carried forward in time, and will at length receive its blissful consummation in eternity.

Now, mark the effect which may sometimes arise from a separate dissertation being constructed on every separate clause and in the order of their following. There are successive portions of time taken up in the act of attending upon the tardiness of a human illustration, and we are apt to think that in the practice the several topics must be proceeded upon in the same order, and one of them must be mastered ere we try the obedience or take the comfort of the rest. We must first come out, and then keep out, and then refrain our hand from the most distant approaches of temptation, and then, and not till then, God will receive us and be a Father to us. Now, my brethren, this is not the way of it. You read the whole of the text in a single in-

stant, and in the very next your mind may be occupied with all its topics and set at work upon them all, and though the promises be the last in the enumeration, yet a faith in them may be the prime mover of the whole obedience which the text sets you to. At one and the same moment in which you come out from the riot of profligate companions there may be the steady purpose of never going back to them, and the vigilant determination to shun their most distant approaches—and the impelling cause of the whole may be consciousness within you that in so doing you are choosing a better part—that you are coming over to the service of a God who is willing even now to receive you into friendship, and to take upon Him your fatherly guidance and protection, and to feed you with spiritual nourishment, and to strengthen you for all the exercises of a spiritual obedience. Have you felt that I have set you to work your own way to God, and kept back from you the encouragement of the promise till you have done so? Then I have done wrong; and I now bring the full encouragement of the promise to bear upon you. Have any of you through the week been keeping at a distance from God, and trying by a hard struggle with the tyranny of idols to qualify yourselves for a nearer approach to Him? Then let the experience of your heartless and fatiguing and unfruitful exertions shut you up unto the faith. I call upon you at this moment to strike an act of reconciliation with a willing and a beseeching God, and at the very time that "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean thing," are all in the mind, let the promise of affection to all who will, and of fatherly affection to all who will, be taken firm hold of by an act of steady and believing assurance.

The truth, therefore, that God is willing to receive you, I bring to bear upon the very first movements of your return from the service of idols to His service. The goodness of God leadeth to repentance. A sense of that goodness brought home to the heart by the faith of the gospel, mingles a constraining influence with the purposes of a

mind deliberating upon the repentance of the gospel. Oh, no! my brethren, I will not therefore keep back the view of a willing and an inviting God till you have described some period of terror, and walked without Him the cheerless round of some previous reformation. I want to possess your heart even now with the assurance of a God bending in compassion over you, and saying to one and to all—"Turn ye, turn ye; why will ye die?" Charged as I am with this message of tenderness to the whole human race, I would not refuse to meet the most profligate among you in the full onset of his willful and determined career, and lay it across his path. I am not at liberty to keep it back from the most worthless and abandoned of the species. The necessity is laid upon me, and woe is me if I preach not this gospel to sinners of all degrees, to rebels of all denominations. You could not, my brethren, you could not carry me to any one haunt of wickedness so deeply sunk in the lowest and the loathsomest of sin's abominations, where I would not forget my office as the messenger of a beseeching God, did I not lift my testimony to His willingness to receive all and to forgive all. You could not point my eye to a single wanderer so far gone from the path of obedience that the widely-sounding call of reconciliation cannot reach him. You could not tell me of a heart so hard and so impenitent that I must not try to soften it by the moving argument of a God waiting to be gracious. Ay, it may have made many a stout resistance to other arguments—it may have defied every warning, and sheathed itself in impenetrable obstinacy against every threatening, and smothered every conviction by plunging the whole man into a deeper and more desperate rebellion; and when all the terrors of the Lord were brought in mustering array against it, it may have gathered itself up into a sterner attitude of defiance, and put on a darker scowl of alienation—Oh, can nothing now be done to storm the citadel that has all along held out so impregnably? Has the embassador of God exhausted his quiver of all its arguments? and must the poor child of infatuation be left without an effort more

to rescue him from the perdition he so determinedly clings to? The text supplies me with one other argument. It puts into my mouth the very substance of that gospel which has so often proved itself the power of God and the wisdom of God unto salvation. It unrobes God of all unrelenting severity, and directs my eye to the Monarch of the Universe seated on a throne of mercy, and pleading for the return of His strayed creatures with every accent of tenderness. He speaks to them with the longings of a father bereaved of his children—He descends to the language of entreaty—the great God of heaven and of earth knocks at the door of every rebellious heart, and begs admittance. That heart which all the terrors of God could not force to repentance, He now plies with the goodness of God that He may lead it to repentance. I will receive you—I have no pleasure in your death—I wish you all, and would welcome you all, back again—I want you to be my sons and my daughters, and I will be a Father to you. Oh! my brethren, if after the wrath and the justice of God have failed to move your hearts out of the inflexibility which belongs to them, He shall again ply you with His invitations, and your bosoms shall remain in shut and sullen resistance to the tenderness of His touching voice—then to the disobedience of His law you have added the neglect of His salvation; and surely it may be said of those who have not only resisted His authority, but have despised the riches of His forbearance and His long-suffering, that the last arrow has been shot at them, and it has proved ineffectual—and that gospel which, had they received it, would have been to their soul the savor of life unto life, has turned out the savor of death unto death.

Mark, then, my brethren, how the faith of the gospel and the repentance of the gospel are linked together, and how the one furnishes the other with its most moving and effectual argument. It is true, I add to my guilt by persevering in my disobedience; but without faith I feel all the helplessness of despair under the burden of a guilt that is already upon me. It is true that every one sin heightens the displeasure of an offended God; but I am even now the ob-

ject of displeasure which, if wreaked upon me in all the severity of justice, would sink me into a suffering more deep and painful than I can stretch my conceptions to. It is true that every act of rebellion committed by my heart swells the heavy account that is betwixt me and God; but the account is already against me to my entire and everlasting destruction—and where in all the wide compass and variety of human thought, shall we find a note that can stir up to exertion the man who knows that he is undone? How, in the name of wonder, can that man be prevailed upon to help himself who knows that upon the very attempt there lies the burden of an impossibility? How shall a man be excited to seek God if he knows that there is an unsurmountable barrier between them? How shall He enter upon the task of propitiating His mercy, if he knows that the immutability of His truth lies in the way of it? and that He of whom it is said, that He hath spoken and will He not perform—hath pronounced a curse upon all the children of iniquity? Ah! my brethren, had He not stepped forward Himself, and said, in the language of my text, that I will receive you, we would have lived without hope, and in so doing we would have lived without God in the world. Had these tidings of the gospel not reached us, we should have been kept down to our old habits and our old ways by the inactivity of despair; and it is not till the hope of making good our return dawn upon us, and the glad prospect of acceptance is laid before us to lure our footsteps from that path of disobedience in which we had wandered, that we shall move a single inch to the call of—"Come out from among them, and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean thing;" and though "I will receive you" be the last in the order of the enumeration put down in the Bible, it is among the first in the order of influence upon the believer's mind; nor should he have bestirred himself in the great work of seeking after God had not the inviting voice of God Himself waved him forward and drawn him to the enterprise.

But God hath done something more than proclaim an

open way of return to the sinners who stand afar off. He hath told us how that way is opened. He has explained to us the mystery of sinners being brought near, and being taken into acceptance. He has not left us to guess, and to wonder, and to suspect the purity of His justice and the inflexibility of His truth, and to look upon sin as a trifle that may be easily fallen into by the creature, and as easily connived at by the Creator. He hath made known His mercy, but not till He got that mercy to meet and be in harmony with His truth. He hath published peace, but not till He established a firm alliance between peace and righteousness. Along with the revelation of His mercy He hath made an awful vindication of the majesty of His high attributes. It is true He condescended to put Himself into the attitude of a petitioner, and implore the return of sinners, and ply them with the assurances of His willingness to welcome them back again. Wonderful attitude, indeed, for the God whose law had been trampled upon, and who throughout this province of His mighty creation had a whole world turned in one wild outcry of rebellion against Him; but oh! my brethren, we mistake it, if we think that the attitude, wonderful as it is, was the attitude of fallen majesty, or of a God whose throne had been dismantled of all the securities which upheld it. Oh, no, my brethren; in this mighty triumph of mercy there was the triumph of His every other attribute; and while the messengers of God have a full warrant to pour into the sinner's ear the plaintive tenderness of a father in quest of his children who had wandered like sheep among the mountains away from him —the warrant is put into their hands by Him, who having magnified the law and made it honorable, has caused the truth and the righteousness of God to burst forth in brighter manifestation than ever upon the eyes of a guilty and humbled world.

This resolves the whole mystery. Sinners who stand afar off are brought near to God through Him that died the just for the unjust. He bare our sins on His body upon the tree, and His blood cleanseth from all sin. This is the

sure way of access. This is the well-ordered covenant. It is because the mighty obstruction is removed by Him who traveled in the greatness of His strength, that God says, without the drawback of a single impediment, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you." It is the assurance of being received—it is the confidence that every bar which lay on the road of access has been cleared away—it is a faith in the sufficiency of what the great Mediator has done for us, that gives the returning sinner all his encouragement to begin the work of repentance. It is this belief in the Son of God which gives a security to the very first acts of repentance, which carries him forward through all the successive steps of that process by which he recovers the lost image of Him who created him, which upholds him through all the varied scenes, and dangers, and enterprises of the Christian warfare, and at length, by the continued supplies of that grace which is so richly provided for all who ask it, makes him stand perfect and complete in the whole will of God. It is Christ who hath done all this. It is He, the memorials of whose atonement are placed before your eyes, that hath made this plain way for the feet of every returning penitent. It is through Jesus Christ evidently set forth crucified before you, that you draw near to God in all those exercises of hope and dependence and new obedience, that are prescribed by Him, and are alone acceptable through Him. It is He, the symbols of whose death we are this day employed in contemplating, who hath opened through the vail of His flesh a new and a living way of access to God. Out of that way there is no hope, and where there is no hope there is no steady nor acceptable godliness. I could not move towards a being who scowled severity upon me. I could not attempt to soften the God who stood before mine eyes shielded in all the inflexibility of unappeased justice. I am kept down by all the oppressive languor of helplessness and despair from offering obedience to Him of whom it is said that He cannot be mocked, and whose truth and purity demand that

He should spurn my wretched attempts in abhorrence away from Him. But in Christ every bond is loosed, and every difficulty is done away—and the soft whisper of that pardon which He has purchased, and of that mercy, the gates of which He has unlocked and let down in plenteous redemption upon a despairing world, sends the right and the effectual influence into a sinner's heart; and it is my prayer that by this great and solemn act of remembrance you may get such a new and affecting view of the way of repentance which lies so clear and so open before you, that from this time forward you may cease from your idols, and come out from among them, and every day of your lives may be enabled to accomplish a wider and a more determined separation, and to touch not any unclean thing which God hateth—that thus, while God, out of Christ, looking upon you as He did upon the Egyptians out of a cloud, and troubling your souls with the terrific aspect of a consuming fire, would never have moved your approaches toward Him, may you now be prevailed upon to turn from all sin by the delightful assurance that God is willing to receive you; and may you be cheered in your every attempt and your every performance by the winning countenance of God in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, and not imputing unto them their trespasses.

ADDRESS.

The great and specifical end of that affecting solemnity we are now engaged in, is to show forth the death of Christ. This is our infirmity, my brethren, that we are so much the creatures of what is present, and of what is sensible. A thing seen makes a distinct and a powerful impression upon us. A thing that is spiritual, and therefore cannot be seen, is conceived but faintly. There is a natural darkness about us through which the realities of the spiritual world look dim and distant, and leave a very languid impression either on the feelings of the heart or on the purposes of our willing and acting and resolving nature. And

this holds true not merely of what is spiritual, but of what is sensible also, if that which is sensible be not present—if removed from us by the length of many ages, it can only be brought home by an act of remembrance, or rather by a narrative of history—if the mind must put itself on a stretch of conception in order to lay hold of it, and to be impressed by it, and to be wakened to that train of sentiment it is fitted to inspire. Now, my brethren, the death of Christ is an event which comes under the latter description. In contemplating that death, the mind is not employed on a spiritual object. That event did not take place beyond the confines of this tangible and material world. It was seen by the eye of man; and had we been present at the Crucifixion, that which we are now employed in remembering would have come home with all the force and all the vivacity of an actual representation upon our senses. But we are now placed at the distance of many hundred years from the era of that great decease which was accomplished at Jerusalem, and we must stir ourselves up to lay hold of it by an act of apprehension, and we must summon all our powers of remembrance and of conception to the exercise; and such is the sluggishness of our mental faculties, that—do our uttermost—we often cannot succeed in realizing anything beyond a very dull and spiritless imagination of the Saviour's death; and to accommodate to this infirmity did our Saviour before He left the world, kindly bequeath and recommend to us the use of an expedient by which the aid of sense is as it were called in to brighten that impression which might otherwise have been so dark and ineffectual. He has instituted a lively and a touching memorial of the whole transaction. He has consecrated to the remembrance of His death the visible symbols of bread and of wine. He has so decreed it, that through the inlet of the senses His death may still be shown forth, and He Himself be evidently set forth crucified before us. And what I call on you, my brethren, practically to observe at present, is to make the appointed use of these material elements—through the medium of the bread you eat, to think

of the Saviour's broken body—through the medium of the wine you drink, to think of the Saviour's shed blood—to contemplate by the eye of faith the real, the substantial, the power-working significancy of this body and blood—how by the one the whole burden of your iniquities is borne—how by the other you are cleansed from all sin—how by both you are reconciled to the great Lawgiver—how through the rent vail of the Redeemer's flesh you may enter with boldness the presence of the Eternal—and how, if your mind be doing with the cross of the Saviour what your body is now doing with the memorials of the Cross, you are standing on that very way of access in which God will rejoice to meet you, and speak quietly to you, and make no more mention of the sins whereby you have sinned against Him, and rejoice over you to do all manner of good, and crown you with His loving-kindness and tender mercy, and give you peace of conscience here and a growing meetness for a crown of glory hereafter.

The great event which we commemorate by the keeping of this sacrament is the death of the Saviour. The great event which we commemorate by the keeping of the Sabbath is the resurrection of the Saviour. It is worthy of remark, that the first disciples did not take the week-day of His death to celebrate that institution which our Saviour appointed as the memorial of it—neither did they take the week-day of that first sacrament at which our Saviour Himself presided, and where He ate the passover with His sorrowing disciples. They remembered His death on the week-day of His resurrection. They assembled to break bread on the first day of the week. They fixed on the great day of Christian triumph as the occasion on which they chose to commemorate an event which was clothed at the time in every character of sadness—which burst upon the despairing apostles as the death-blow of all their hopes—and forced them to give up all their fond and splendid anticipatious of Him of whom they thought that verily it was He should have redeemed Israel. Christ

arose from the grave and restored to them all their triumphant thoughts of the Master they had chosen—and they fixed on the first day of the week for the sacrament of the Supper, that when its touching symbols reminded them how Christ had died, the day on which they made use of those symbols should put the comfortable suggestion into their hearts, that rather He is risen again. I, in the same manner, call on you, my brethren, to mingle the Sabbatical with the sacramental remembrance; and while you weep over the afflicting memorials of that death by which the whole burden of a world's atonement was borne by Him who in that hour put forth all His strength and travailed in the greatness of it, sorrow not even as others who have no hope; but think, oh think, of that right hand of God where He now liveth, and that place of glory which He now occupies.

But indeed the words of the institution provide for this very remembrance. We are called on not merely to show forth the Lord's death, but to show it forth till He come again. Now, from what quarter are we to look for Him? Not from the prison-house of the grave, for the barrier of this confinement He has already broken; not from the toils of His contest with the principalities of sin and of death, for this contest is now over, and He has already ascended up on high, laden with the spoils and crowned with the triumphs of victory—not from the dark abodes of corruption, for He has already cleared His unfettered way from the whole of this bondage, and the men of Galilee beheld Him as he was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight, and a voice was heard by them, asking—Why stand ye gazing up unto heaven, for this same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven? I should like you, my brethren, to exercise your faith on this solemn and affecting reality—I should like you to enter from this moment into a firmer, and a faithfuller, and a more closely felt alliance with that living intercessor who is now looking over you—who sees your every heart—who takes a

note of all its movements and all its purposes—who hands up your most secret aspirations to the Father who sitteth on the throne, and is ever ready to plead the merit of His all-perfect obedience on behalf of all who believe in Him. Let the spirit of this hallowed place accompany you into the world. When you go down from the mount of communion, may its faith, and its peace, and its purposed holiness go along with you. Walk through life as the followers of Him of whom you have now witnessed a good confession in the eyes of men; and with hearts refreshed by this act of fellowship with the Father, go back to your business and your homes more strengthened than ever for all duty, more devoted than ever to all the pursuits and to all the performances of holiness.

SERMON XX.

[PREACHED at Glasgow, 26th November, 1815.]

LUKE IV. 1–13.

"And Jesus, being full of the Holy Ghost, returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, being forty days tempted of the devil. And in those days he did eat nothing: and when they were ended, he afterward hungered. And the devil said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it be made bread. And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God. And the devil, taking him up into an high mountain, shewed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said unto him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them, for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it. If thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Get thee behind me, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. And he brought him to Jerusalem, and set him on a pinnacle of the temple, and said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down from hence: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee; and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. And Jesus answering, said unto him, It is said, Thou shall not tempt the Lord thy God. And when the devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from him for a season."

VERSE 1.—"And Jesus, being full of the Holy Ghost, returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness." It is worthy of remark that as Jesus in His human nature was tempted in all points like as we are, so He overcame that temptation by the very same power which is in a measure bestowed upon us for combating with temptation. He overcame Himself, and it is out of His fullness that we receive that which enables us to overcome also. He was full of the Holy Ghost in His combat with the great adversary. It was a contest between the power of God's Spirit and of the spirit which worketh in the children of disobedience. The parties in the contest, when Christ our head was engaged, were the very same with the parties in the contest when we His members are engaged.

Verse 2.—"Being forty days tempted of the devil. And

in those days he did eat nothing: and when they were ended, he afterward hungered." There is no doubt that the appellation of "devil" here is restricted to one particular being; and with us it has all the limited signification of a proper name. But the term in the original is descriptive of character—given originally to the prince of the apostate angels, because it characterized him, but also occasionally used in the Bible in its general signification. Thus, if taken in its original meaning, it may be, and actually is in some parts of the Bible, applied to human beings. In its primitive sense, it signifies a false accuser, or a slanderer, or a traducer. (1 Tim. iii. 11; 2 Tim. iii. 3; Tit. ii. 3; John vi. 70). Satan is another name applied to the prince of the apostate angels. It is also significant of character or state, and means an adversary.

Verse 3.—"And the devil said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it be made bread." We have, in all probability, very far from a full record of all the wiles and suggestions of the tempter. Christ was tempted forty days—it is thought by the mere instigations which the devil put into His heart; but that he afterwards, at the end of this time, appeared to Him in a visible form, when He was ahungered with long abstinence, and then plied Him with three great and last attempts to seduce Him from His post of entire trust and entire obedience to God.

Verse 4.—"And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God." When Jesus took upon Him human nature, He did so for the express purpose that He should suffer and that He should do as a brother of the species. It is the perfection of his human obedience which renders His example applicable to us; and it is this which qualified Him for being a High Priest for others. He had no sins of His own to atone for. He knew no sin, yet became a sin-offering for us; and it is the purity of His obedience as a man which is imputed for righteousness to them who believe on Him. Now, had He made use of His miraculous

power for the purpose of exempting Himself from those sufferings which were laid upon Him by His Father, this would not only have impaired the perfection of His suffering obedience, but would have made it quite useless to us as an example—for we have not the miraculous power that He had ever in readiness to be exerted in the hour of calamity. It would have been a positive non-compliance with the appointment of His Father; for you will observe that His situation in the remote wilderness, and the consequent hunger which His distance from the supplies of food brought upon Him, was not a thing of His own doing. He was led by the Spirit into His present situation—there He was by the will of God. It was not for Him to do anything, but to wait the issue of God's counsel concerning Him. To work a miracle in order to repair the necessary evil of the situation into which God had brought Him, were to distrust God. The language for Him was, My Father brought me here, and He will carry me in safety out again. The pain He felt from hunger was of God's laying on; and should He endeavor to assuage it by a miracle, this were an advantage to Himself, but no advantage in the way of example, no advantage to the individuals of that species whose form He put on, and whose infirmities He bore, and whose sufferings He underwent—that He might set Himself before them an example that they should walk in His steps. It would have frustrated this purpose entirely, besides being a positive act of dissent from the will of God which brought Him to His present situation, and which laid upon Him all his sufferings. The gift of working miracles belonged to Him as a talent for the use of others, and not as a privilege for the ease or gratification of Himself. There is another remarkable example of His abstaining from the exercise of miraculous power, when it could have served the purpose of delivering Him from His enemies. He could have obtained the assistance of twelve legions to deliver Him from the hands of His murderers; but He forbore—for had He done so, it would have frustrated the purposes of His mission. That example reflects an explanation on the present one. The

sentiment with which He repelled the instigation of the tempter was a sentiment of trust in God. God brought me here, and He can provide for me here. I am not to step out of my way to save myself from the painfulness of a situation of God's putting me into. I am not to do what is undutiful or untrustful to recover the mischiefs of a state which was brought on by Him, and not by any independent movement of my own human will at all. Here I am by His will; and my confidence is in His wisdom, and in the power of His word, which is able, if He so choose, to keep me alive in the absence of all ordinary means. There is one remarkable peculiarity worthy of all observation in this verse, Christ was led by the Spirit into the wilderness. It was in the fullness of the Spirit that He entered into the contest with the great adversary of men. It was by the armor of the Spirit's suggestion that He was enabled to overcome all the artfulness and all the allurement of the suggestions of the tempter. But still the suggestion with which He combated and overcame, though given Him by the Spirit, was neither more nor less than a quotation from the Bible. This is a fine illustration of the passage where the word of God is called the sword of the Spirit. It may practically be of great use to all of you. Take every practicable and ordinary means for making yourselves acquainted with your Bibles. Store your minds with its sayings and its passages, for they constitute—if I may be allowed the expression—the material armor by which you wrestle with the enemies of your salvation. When tempted, for example, to evil company, it is no doubt the Spirit that will enable you to turn aside from this temptation; but it is not by any visitation of extraordinary light upon the subject of this danger. He may do no more than exercise His office of bringing all things to remembrance, by bringing the single text—"Be not deceived; evil communications corrupt good manners," to bear with powerful efficacy upon your understandings and your fears. This is the general way in which He acts. We have no reason to expect that in any given case He will ever act otherwise. It is presumption to trust

in any other kind of illumination than by the words of Scripture being made luminous and impressive to you; or in any other kind of defense than by the moral influence of the lessons of Scripture upon the choice and conduct of the believer. There is something highly interesting in this introduction of the Bible as the weapon made use of by the Son of God, to carry Him through the contest with the prince and the leader of that mighty rebellion, which seems to have spread so extensively over some higher fields of creation. Let it rebuke our irreverence for the sacred volume—let it chase away the fanaticism of all unscriptural visions and unscriptural inspirations from the religion which we profess, and to which we do injustice if we strip it of the dignity of reason, or graft upon it the weaknesses of a superstitious fancy. Let it teach us, on the one hand, that we do wrong by resting a security on the naked promise of the Spirit to guide and to enlighten us—for the Spirit does so, not against and not without, but with the use of the Bible; and we have no right whatever to expect that He will make use of this instrument in our behalf, if we do not take the prescribed way of using it in our own behalf. Let us be diligent in the exercise of all ordinary means for growing in the knowledge and in the remembrance of it—let it be our daily perusal; and let us never think that we shall be able to overcome temptation with our minds away from the Bible—but that it is when the lessons of the Bible are present to our minds, when we have laid up the word of God in our heart, that we do not offend Him.

But, on the other hand, let us not forget, that though it was by a quotation from the Bible that our great Patron repelled the instigation of our great adversary, He was all the while under the guidance of the Spirit. It was in the fullness of the Holy Ghost that He grappled with the mighty enemy of human salvation. While we read, then, let us feel at the same time our dependence on Him who alone can make us understand what we read with a saving and a spiritual discernment; and while we exercise our memory upon what we read, let us feel our dependence at the same

time on Him who alone can bring things to our remembrance so as to suit our occasions, and who can give us grace to help us in the time of need by bringing into our mind that verse, or that passage, or that scriptural sentiment, which will serve as the appropriate suggestion for repelling the temptation on hand. Now, this is the right and compound attitude of those who busy themselves in either learning the way of salvation, or walking in that way. It is only with the ordinary use of the Bible, on the one hand, and the dependence of faith on the pure and life-giving Spirit, on the other, that we complete the preparation for fighting with all the enemies of our souls, and may be said to have taken to ourselves the whole armor of God.

In the order of the narrative by Matthew, what is recorded by Luke as the last and concluding attempt of the devil, is brought in as immediately succeeding the one that I have now so largely insisted on. I shall therefore at present pass over the intermediate verses, and go on to the ninth verse. The last sentiment which our Saviour expressed was a sentiment of reliance upon God. God hath brought me into a way of His own choosing; and I will submit to all the sufferings of that way, and will rather trust to some miraculous exercise of power in my favor, than by an act of distrust and an act of undutifulness make any attempt to escape these sufferings myself. The present temptation is most artfully accommodated to this state of mind. Let me now try the extent of your trust in the power of God—throw yourself from this pinnacle of the temple, and see what God's power can accomplish for you. You have brought one verse from the Bible to repel my last suggestion, I will bring another to enforce my present one. And thus, with a besetting plausibility of argument and address, does this Satan ask it of our Saviour to cast Himself down from hence, "For it is written, He shall give His angels charge over thee, to keep thee; and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone." The answer to this proposal is given in verse 12—"It is said, Thou shalt not tempt the

Lord thy God." To tempt signifies to try. The effect of a trial is often a discovery of the sinfulness and deceitfulness of him who is the subject of it; and hence, to tempt has got another signification distinct from the original one —to allure, to seduce. But here you must take it according to its original meaning—thou shalt not put God to the proof—thou shalt not make an experiment of God. But it is said here, "The Lord thy God." Now the God whom you have embraced as a reconciled Father may be called thy God. Jesus could well appropriate God in this manner; and you may understand wherein the sinfulness of tempting God consists, by figuring to yourself the case of a friend whom you had every reason to trust, but whom in point of fact you were not perfectly sure of, and upon whom you made an experiment with the view of ascertaining his fidelity and the extent of his regard for you. For this purpose you might create a case, or you might feign a necessity, with the view of ascertaining what the conduct of your doubtful friend would be. Now does not this imply an ungenerous suspicion of him? Is there not a want of trust in the very attempt to make yourself surer of him than you feel yourself to be at this moment? And if you have every reason to repose in the faithfulness and in the constancy of his affection, were it not a more generous confidence on your part to carry about with you the general assurance—"If I get involved in necessities I am sure he will step forward to get me out of them," than for you to step out of your way, and either create or feign a necessity for the purpose of trying him? And so of God, my brethren, in the present case, in reference to Christ. He had already given proof of the confidence He rested on the support of His Father and of His Friend by the way in which He resisted the first instigation of the great adversary. I will not step out of the way in order to deliver myself from the evils of a situation into which God hath Himself led me—I will not break a duty to do so. I will not put my power of working miracles to a different use from that for which it was conferred upon me. This

power was not conferred for the purpose of helping myself out of the trials which God is pleased to lay on me, and to make this use of it would be an act of distrust and an act of rebellion. Oh, no! here I am by His will, and I leave myself with unbounded confidence to His wisdom. Now observe the address and the promptitude with which His able and intelligent adversary avails himself of this state of sentiment in the mind of Jesus. Give us a proof of this confidence—cast yourself down from the pinnacle of this temple—let not your distrust in God arrest you or make you hesitate about doing this, for He will bear you up; and out of those very Scriptures from which you have gotten your argument against my first instigation, do I bring an argument in behalf of my second instigation, for it is written, how He has given His angels charge over thee, to keep thee; and how in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.

Now mark the still superior intelligence and address with which our Saviour extricated Himself from this wile of the advesary. He perceived where the art lay, and He saw through the covering of plausibility which he who had the power of transforming himself into an angel of light spread over it; and by the answer, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God, He most entirely vindicated the consistency of his own sentiments, and most triumphantly repelled this renewed attack of the tempter. I would not go out of my way to distrust God's faithfulness; but neither will I go out of the way to put his faithfulness to the trial. If God put me into a given situation, I am sure that out of all its evils and all its difficulties He will extricate me; but I will not put myself, by any wanton, or arbitrary, or undutiful act of mine, into any given situation with the view of an experimenting on the kindness and the fidelity of God. Of that kindness and that fidelity I entertain the most unshaken assurance. Sustained by this principle I will endure all the agonies of hunger, till the same Spirit who led me into this wilderness leads me out of it. I am here by His will; nor will I take one unwarrantable step to alleviate

the burden of these trials which He is pleased to lay upon me; but it is the very strength of this confidence upon which Satan is persuading me to put my Friend and my Father to the trial that makes me resist such an experiment, and repel the artful suggestion which would lead me to it. I will not betray a distrust in God by going out of the way to provide myself with bread; neither will I betray a distrust in God by going out of my way to ascertain a point which I am already sure of. Oh! it was a deep and artful policy which lay at the bottom of this second instigation; but does not this just heighten your esteem for the discernment of that superior wisdom which overmatched and overruled it? and in the pure and delicate and correct line of conduct which was followed by our Saviour, do you not perceive both the reach of a commanding sagacity, and the harmonious workings of one noble, consistent, and well-sustained principle?

This passage of our Saviour's history admits, I think, of many interesting applications. But at present I shall conclude with one remark which, if kept in mind, might prepare you for the various lessons wherewith the narrative of our Saviour's temptation is charged. I beg that you will make a distinct exercise of attempting to get the better of those ludicrous and degrading associations which the very name and conception of the devil do in fact bring into the mind. It is most unfortunate when any one item in the list of revealed truths is contemplated in such a light as to have anything of the mean or the familiar, and far more, of the light and jocular, annexed to it. I have no doubt that the general levity of sentiment which obtains even among professing Christians upon this subject is the work of one of his own artifices. Its undoubted effect is to disguise from the eye of your own minds the power and the seriousness of your own enemies—to lull you into a security where no security should be felt—to make you laugh when you ought to be alarmed—to seduce you from the post of vigilance you are everywhere called upon to maintain—and to fill you with giddiness upon a subject on which

you ought to feel all the solemnity of a Bible doctrine, and all the seriousness of a danger that, if not guarded against, may beset you to your final and everlasting destruction. Is there anything in the passage now submitted to you, that throws the slightest air of wantonness over this department in the field of revelation? Do you not see in it all the talent and skill of an archangel, guided no doubt by the malignity of his fallen nature, but bringing all the resources of a most consummate art into this one battle with the Captain of our salvation—and overborne only by that superior reach of discernment, and that superior force of principle, which belonged to Him in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Point me a single other passage of the Bible that can at all justify the senseless levities which are indulged upon this topic. Is it in that high and prophetic vision of the Son of God, when He said, I beheld Satan fall like lightning from heaven—or in that verse where he is called the god of this world—or in that where the mighty work of the Saviour is stated to consist in the destroying of his works—or in the anxious and repeated warnings by which the disciples are everywhere plied, that they may resist him, that they may guard against him, that they may not keep themselves ignorant of his devices, that they may not be taken captives by him at his pleasure, that they may not be blinded by him lest the glorious gospel of Christ should shine upon them? Ah! my brethren, we see not the matter aright, if we see not the most sublime and eventful contest going on among the upper orders of creation, and that the sovereignty over men is the grand object of the contest. In the passage before us, you see Satan in visible alarm for the security of his usurped dominions; and you see him foiled in his first attempt on the great Prince and Deliverer of mankind, who in the mighty travail of His soul, put forth all the greatness of His strength, and spoiled principalities and powers, and made a show of them openly. This is the actual situation of the world—a mighty stage of conflict and ambition to higher beings, who are aspiring after the

mastery over it. We are the subjects of this great and mighty contention; and is it, I would ask, is it a right exercise for us to lift the idiot laugh, and scatter our ridiculous allusions around a matter of which the Bible has attested the solemn and impressive reality, and in which the fate of our eternity is so deeply involved? Ah! my brethren, you are not rightly prepared for the contest, if you remain thus willfully and wantonly ignorant of the enemies that beset you—you have not yet put on the whole armor of God, if the habitual attitude of resistance to the great adversary be not diligently maintained by you—you have not done all to stand, if you exercise not that faith in Christ by which alone you are enabled to withstand him whose works Christ came to destroy—you do not see the matter aright, if in every temptation which crosses your path, and in every evil thought which would lead you from the belief or the love or the practice of the gospel, you do not recognize another and another attempt of him who is incessantly warring against the soul: And happy shall I be, my brethren, should these hints give such a direction to the desire and the doings of any one of you, as may help you forward in that great business of sanctification, by which the influence of the Evil One over your alienated hearts is completely done away, and you are rendered altogether meet for the company of Him in heaven—whose grace dealt out to you on earth enables you to resist the devil, and purifies you from all spot and wrinkling, and restores to you the lost image of your Creator, and prepares you for the fellowship of Him and of the unfallen angels who surround His throne.

SERMON XXI.

[PREACHED at Glasgow, 3d December, 1815.]

LUKE IV. 1–13.

"And Jesus, being full of the Holy Ghost, returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, being forty days tempted of the devil. And in those days he did eat nothing: and when they were ended, he afterward hungered. And the devil said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it be made bread. And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God. And the devil, taking him up into an high mountain, showed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said unto him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them, for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it. If thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Get thee behind me, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. And he brought him to Jerusalem, and set him on a pinnacle of the temple, and said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down from hence: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee; and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. And Jesus answering, said unto him, It is said, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. And when the devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from him for a season."

JESUS was set before us as an example that we should follow His steps; and if we do not fasten an attentive eye upon all that He did in this lower world, we do not fulfill the duty which lies upon us of looking unto Jesus. In conformity to the undoubted truth of this assertion, that all Scripture is profitable, there is no part of our Savior's revealed history which may not be turned to some profitable account; and it is from the want of attention, from the listless and superficial style of our reading the Bible, and running over the task of its successive chapters, that so many of its passages are just of as little significancy, and exert as small an influence over us, as if they were veiled from our eye by some material covering, or occurred at intervals as so many chasms of blank paper. Many of us, perhaps, may never have adverted to the practical lessons that may be gathered from the history of the remarkable encounter that took place between the Captain of our salvation, arm-

ed as He was with the fullness of the Spirit of God, and that great adversary who, whatever our dark and degraded conceptions of him, is at the head of a mighty rebellion on the wide theater of God's administration, and, with the exception of a very little flock, wields an entire ascendency over the face of this world which lieth in wickedness, and claims so thorough and so firm a footing in this province of the universe, that he is called in the Bible the god of this world; and who, when he made his attack upon the Savior, armed with the Spirit of God, entered into the combat with Him by the opposing armor of that spirit which worketh in the children of disobedience; and the result of the contest, wherein the great Head of the Church was engaged, was just the same with what the result will be of that actual contest which he carries on with the members of the Church; even those who hold Christ the Head, and who, receiving out of His fullness the same Spirit of God, will be enabled to overcome on this principle, that greater is He who is in them than he who is in the world.

But we have not gathered all the information that is to be gotten out of the passage before us, until we have ascertained what the precise moral lessons are which the conduct of Christ, under the particular temptations by which He was assailed, is fitted to impress. Do any cases occur in the whole history of man, bearing such a resemblance to the cases of the text that we may obtain out of them a pointed and particular instruction of Go, and do likewise? Tell me a single case, for example, that can make out anything like a parallel between the situation of a human being and the situation of Jesus Christ, when He was tempted by the instigation of commanding this stone that it be made bread. Why, my brethren, I believe that out of this passage a principle may be gathered applicable to a thousand diversities in the history of human affairs; but instead of announcing a general principle, and then applying it to cases, I have often thought it a more effectual way to begin with stating an impressive case, and out of that evolving a clear and commanding principle. I direct your attention,

then, all at once to the very frequent and familiar case of a man on the eve of bankruptcy, when he is agitated by all the forebodings of controversy, when futurity lowers upon him, and his heart bleeds within him at the approaching descent which his family must soon make before the eye of the public. I do not say that the resemblance between him and his great pattern lies in his having to sustain the buffeting of a personal encounter with the adversary of his soul; but think not, my brethren, think not that the vigilant eye of this prince of darkness is not upon him—that he is not making every use of his opportunity to secure a subject to his dominions; and, though he does not whisper the temptation into his ear, think not that he is not plying his heart with an allurement which many, I fear, in the unhappy circumstances I am now conceiving, have found to be irresistible. He does not just say, Command this stone that it be made bread; but does he not come round the despairing man with his busy suggestions, and make every trial to shake him out of his integrity, and fill his agitated bosom with the painful image of a beggared family, even as the bosom of the Savior was filled with the agonies of hunger? And do you not think that he has some hand in the affair when the deluded man is meditating on unfair and dishonorable expedients for securing some fragment to himself out of the wreck of his ruined speculation? Ah! my brethren, it is he who, in effect, has commanded that such goods as can be easily conveyed from the notice of creditors shall be turned into bread. It is he who sets you on some plan of secrecy for turning all you can lay your hand on into a provision for yourself and for your children. It is he who glosses over the dishonesty of the proceeding, and lulls the conscience into quietness, by mingling with the temptation the kind, and amiable, and natural impulse of a parent's affection and a parent's anxiety. It is he, my brethren, who pursues this artful game, and finds his abundant harvest of ruined principle and integrity in that sweeping tide of fluctuation, which sets in at intervals with such a devouring energy, as not only to overwhelm the rash adventurer, but

to tear up by the sinews the firmest and oldest establishments. Ah! my brethren, it is in a season so critical as this that the principle of a Christian is brought to its severest trial, and that the wily tempter plies him with the suggestion to take hold of what is not his own, and on what he has no right to put his finger, that he might turn it into bread.

Now, mark the sentiment wherewith a real and an altogether Christian will meet the deceitfulness of this temptation. The elevated language of his heart will be, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him." Though the terrors of approaching poverty are mustering before me in dark and threatening array, yet will I not be tempted from my integrity. My Saviour would not command the stone to be made bread, because had He done so He would have violated a committed trust. I will not turn a single fragment of my substance to the secret purpose of a provision for my family, because, should I do so, I would be violating a commanded duty. Oh, no! I will meet this temptation as my great Exemplar did before me, and I will meet it with His own weapon and His own sentiment—that man does not live by bread alone, but by every word which proceedeth out of the mouth of God. Oh! what a fine security does Christian principle confer, for all that is just, and honorable, and of good report! How clearly and commandingly does the line of duty lie before the eye of him who has firmly seated his confidence in God! We have a warrant to pray to Him for daily bread; and tell me if ever the promise failed of its accomplishment, that as the day came the provision of the day came along with it? To this extent every Christian is warranted to trust in Him; and with such an anchor of security, all distressing anxieties for the morrow should be given to the winds. This is the noble defense which I call on one and all to set up, in that dark hour of their visitation, when they are floundering along through an ocean of many difficulties. "I have been young, and now am old," says the psalmist, "and yet never have I seen the children of the righteous begging

their bread." This word proceeded out of the mouth of God; and be assured, my brethren, that if you hold fast your integrity, you will secure for your children the inheritance of a heavenly Father's blessing, as well as of an earthly father's unsullied name.

I trust, my brethren, that this case brings home to your mind the general principle, that no difficulties whatever should tempt you to put forth your hand to a violation of the law of God—that as the Saviour kept rigidly by His trust, you will keep rigidly by your duty; and an unshaken confidence in His word, will, under every temptation of unlawful gain, keep you in steadfast adherence to His will.

Let me now proceed to the moral lesson that may be gathered out of the second recorded attempt of the great adversary (second in Matthew, though third in Luke) of men upon the great Captain of man's salvation. Why, he bade Him, since His trust in God was so great, throw Himself from the pinnacle of the temple, and He would be borne in safety to the ground. Let me explain to you shortly the principle on which our Saviour resisted that temptation. Whatever the situation be in which the will and the providence of God have placed me, such is my confidence in His wisdom, that I will not do an undutiful or an untrustful thing to help myself out of it; but though I trust God, I will not tempt God; I will not, by any wanton and uncalled-for movement on my part, put myself into a situation, in the false hope that He will bear me up and defend me against all the danger of it. I am sure of His wisdom; but I would not have man, in whose behalf it is my office to hold out an example, to be so sure of his own wisdom as to step out of his way, under the false presumption that God will ever be interfering to protect him from the consequences of his own errors and his own temerity; and accordingly, He repelled the instigation of His opponent by the memorable sentence—"Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." Now is there any conceivable case, in the history of human affairs, to which this passage in the

example of our Saviour is applicable? Is there any such thing as men being tempted to throw themselves down from the pinnacles on which they are standing? Why, my brethren, I think there is. There is an actual giving way to the second temptation in ordinary life, and among the same men, too, who are most ready to give way to the first temptation. It were not difficult, I think, to prove the consistency of principle which runs through both the answers of our Saviour to the two distinct proposals of His skillful and malicious antagonist. And I think it another proof of this consistency, that the two temptations which our Saviour resisted by one and the same exercise of sentiment, are often yielded to by one and the same individual. To take up my former illustration, does it not often happen, that the same man who is most ready to give way to the excessive spirit of commercial adventure, is the least scrupulous as to the rights of his injured creditors? In the act of turning what is legally and equitably theirs to his own use, he is commanding that to become bread to his family which he has no right to put a finger upon; and in so doing he is giving way to the first temptation. Think not, my brethren, oh, think not, that I pronounce a sentence of sweeping condemnation on the unfortunate; but let me ask, if it does not sometimes happen, that the first temptation assails him only because the second has already been given way to—that had he kept by the safe and the moderate line of his first operations, he would have had all the safety of a man who was walking upon sure ground; but this would not satisfy him, and he threw himself from the actual pinnacle of his standing in society, and plunged into the abyss of some tempting speculation—not with the view of being brought to the earth in safety, it is true, but with the view of being wafted by some gale of prosperity to a higher pinnacle of wealth and of distinction than he before stood upon. You all know, my brethren, the difference between a line that is less, and a line that is more hazardous. I will not pretend to draw the limit between duty and disobedience in this department of human affairs—this must

be left to your own experience, and your own prayers for the directing wisdom of God; but surely, surely, my brethren, it is right that you should know in the general, how a man may put himself out of the sure track of an humble employment, and by so doing may incur that charge of temerity which you would fasten on the man who threw himself down from a pinnacle—how confidence in one's good fortune may be carried to the length of a blind impetuosity—how the glitter of an ambitious speculation may just have the same effect upon him as if the tempter whispered into his ear that he should throw himself down from the pinnacle on which he was standing, and that he should, by the buoyancy of a prosperous gale, be wafted to a pinnacle of greater height and glory; and how, in giving way to this second temptation, he is not trusting God, but he is trusting to a picture of his own imagination, and tempting God.

I must not dwell too long upon this topic; and will not stop to extract all the instruction that may be gathered out of the interesting passage now before us. Enough that I set your thoughts agoing about it; and if I do so, you will soon perceive, that out of this second temptation there may be gathered a lesson far more general than the one I have now insisted on, viz., that of restraining the spirit of commercial adventure, and leading you to be satisfied on the safer and the humbler ground of your present operations. It goes to establish the general lesson of prudence, amid all the cases and varieties of human life. He is the prudent man who makes his experience of the past guide and enlighten his conduct as to the future. Now, what is the knowledge which his past experience confers upon him? Why, it tells him what is the ordinary course of Providence in such and such circumstances—what is the general method of God's administration in the world—what are the laws of external nature, and what are the general laws of human life, and of the human mind. Now, I can conceive a man of misled and fanatical piety to say—Oh, I have nothing to do with prudence, I have nothing to do with the work of

calculating upon appearances, and upon ordinary courses, and upon natural laws and natural tendencies—my confidence is in God. And thus throwing himself loose from all the restraints which bind down the conduct of grave, and calculating, and judicious men, he may expose religion to contempt, and himself to all the mischiefs of blind and unadvised temerity. Now look to the conduct of the Saviour, when asked to throw Himself from a pinnacle of the temple. What was it that restrained Him from doing so? It was just His calculation upon a general law in nature. He acted upon His unfailing experience of the descent of bodies that had no material support to rest upon; and to flee in the face of this law, which the artful deceiver would have persuaded Him to be an act of pious confidence in God, He felt to be a tempting of God, and not a trusting of Him.

Now, my brethren, take this to yourselves. Apply this lesson to other laws, and other of the ordinary and established courses of Providence in the world. Admit experience, and your knowledge of the past, and your general acquaintance with nature and with human life into your calculations on the line of duty; and let me see you exemplify that most respectable of all combinations—the combination of good sense with a most humble and earnest and devoted piety. It is evident that this lesson opens a fine field for the exercise of wisdom; but its applications are far too manifold for being detailed in all their circumstances and in all their variety from the pulpit. What is it that any of you are now hesitating about? Is it about the disposal of one of your family in the way of settling him in the world? I trust you have it more at heart that he should obtain the bread which endureth than that he should obtain a large portion of that bread which perisheth. Well, you perhaps think that this is your real feeling and principle on the subject; but have you brought prudence and your experience of human life to bear upon the question—what would be the best situation for the endurance and the growth of Christian principle within him? Don't you

know what the general laws of nature and of the human mind are in this matter?—that the general effect of exposure is to blast the tender infancy of that principle which you may have put into the youthful bosom—that the general effect of evil communication is to corrupt good manners—that in committing him to the broad surface of a world lying in wickedness, there are some situations which all experience attests to be more adverse to virtue than others? And are you admitting all this into your calculation; or, instead of a single eye upon the eternity of him whose guardianship God hath committed to you, is your single eye fixed on his earthly aggrandizement?—and as to any faint wish you may feel for his being provided on the other side of death with a house that is not made with hands and eternal in the heavens, do you get it all disposed of by bidding God bless him, when the weeping boy takes his departure, and he is followed to the door by the tears and wishes of his family? Ah! my brethren, if prudence has not gone along with piety, I call upon you not to trust to its fervent aspirations. This young man who is leaving the home of his father, and his heart swelling with every Christian purpose, and all the lessons of a mother's watchful and affectionate jealousy fresh in his bosom, may perhaps, by the ill-judged choice of these very parents, have been set on a career which will bring him back to the mansion of their old age, an alien from his God, and a graceless scorner at every Christian feeling which exists in his family. He may be the object of your daily prayers, and not an evening devotion may be lifted up to heaven without the remembrance of him who is in a distant land; but the tidings of his fall may reach you—and in the melancholy result of a soul irrecoverably lost in wickedness and estrangement from his Maker, you may at length be made to feel what a sad error it was to tempt God, while you thought you were piously and affectionately trusting in Him. This is one out of many applications. The Bible is so pregnant with meaning, that I might linger for months on the wisdom of a single chapter without exhausting it.

Ponder its passages. Be assured that the devoted study of a whole life will not carry you to the limit of all that instruction which is to be gathered out of it. It may be your daily exercise; and yet every day some new and wondrous thing may evolve to the mind which humbly commits itself to the guidance of that enlightening Spirit who makes use of the word as His instrument. Let it be your exercise on some portion of every day; and let the remembrance of it be your delight all the day long; and however darkly or awkwardly you may go about the work of applying these Scriptures to your everyday and familiar concerns at the first, by reason of use, and with the blessing of God, your senses will be exercised to discern both the good and the evil.

I trust I may have said enough to convince you of the respect that you owe to the ordinary course of nature and of Providence. Christ has given the sanction of His example to this respect by the answer wherewith He repelled the second instigation of the tempter. He would not cast Himself down from the pinnacle of the temple, because He was aware of the law of gravitation; and He felt that a rash presumption on His part, as if God would interpose to suspend this law on His behalf, would be not to trust God, but to tempt God. In the same manner, my brethren, whatever be the situation you are placed in, the first and the paramount maxim is at all times, and in all circumstances, and in defiance of all hazards, to do that which is your commanded duty; and I have already showed, how our Saviour's treatment of the first recorded temptation could be brought to bear upon this lesson. But, on the other hand, if there is no requirement calling upon you to make the exposure of yourself to those evils which nature and experience point out to be the consequences of such and such a line of proceeding—then it is a tempting of God to take that line; and therefore it is that a Christian, anxious to know the path in which he should go, will not only learn diligently the will of God as put down in His word, lest he should transgress against God by an act of

disobedience, but he will also gather the indications of God's will concerning him from the circumstances in which he finds himself placed, and from the general effect of such circumstances, lest he should tempt God by an act of presumption. Whatever, my brethren, be the actual situation of any man among you, you stand upon safe ground when you say, Here I am by the will of God; and should any inducement be held out for you to change your situation, or should you deliberate upon the question, whether it would be right to make such a change or to adopt such a step—then it is not merely your prudence, but your duty, to make your experience of the past, your acquaintance with the general course of things, to bear upon the question. For this purpose you take a survey of all the circumstances, and you calculate the effect of such and such measures, and you frame your calculation on your recollections of the ordinary processes of nature and experience. Does what I know of my habits make it advisable for me to change my present line of employment, or to continue it? Does what I know of my talent for usefulness tell me that it would be more productively employed in the present field of my exertions, or in another which the course of things has laid before me? Does what I know of the difficulties of one situation and the facilities of another, enable me to make up my mind on the question—whether I ought or ought not to decide upon a transferrence? These are questions which a man, with no other principle in his bosom but the love of God and the love of men, may sit in deliberation over. They may be the calculations of a wise and reflecting experience; but this does not hinder them from being also the calculations of religious duty. It gives a mighty clearness and command to the question, when he is sitting in judgment over a conjuncture which he did not create himself, but which was brought by the uncontrolled course of events and of circumstances to his door. If he is sure that in no previous step of the affair he has tempted God by any willful act of his own, then the case that is before him may be taken up as a case present-

ed by God to his notice; and he must have a care, now that it is presented to him, lest he tempt God by deciding the matter in opposition to the light of experience, or the established courses of nature and of providence. My object in all this, my brethren, is to reconcile you to a lan guage which some hold to be fanatical. You may have read or heard of people trying to find out what were the leadings of providence in a given case, and to collect the will of God from a deliberate survey of the circumstances by which they were surrounded. Now, my brethren, I maintain that it is a very high point of Christian wisdom to decide this question; and it is a question upon which the most grave, and diligent, and I will also say it, the most judicious exercises of thought have been bestowed. It is very true that it is a wisdom which the world knoweth not, and into which the men of the world can not enter; and when they hear of a call, or a leading of providence, they conceive the idea of a direct inspiration, and that the man who professes to act upon such a call has dreamed a dream, or seen a vision, or heard the utterance of a voice, or felt an impulse upon his imagination and his heart. There is nothing of all this, my brethren, in these matters. The man does no more than give God the homage of being the author of all that actually is, and he ascribes his present circumstances, and inducements, and prospects, to the will of God. He knows that it is his duty to pray for wisdom, and in everything to make his requests known unto God; but he expects no supernatural intimation upon the subject —he only brings all the wisdom he has gotten to bear on the question of whether it will be most for usefulness to take this one step or that other step. In deliberating on this question, so far from overlooking the natural and accustomed tendencies of things, he makes them the groundwork of his calculation. He is not so presumptuous as to expect that God will change the courses or suspend the laws of nature for his special behoof, and so he feels that it would be as much tempting God to act in opposition to any of the known laws, whether of matter or of mind, or

to any one of the established connections between means and their ends—as our Saviour would have felt that He had been tempting God had He been acting in opposition to the known law of the descent of heavy and unsupported bodies. All this he deliberates upon lest he should throw himself from the pinnacle of safety; and thus it is, my brethren, that, in attempting to decide what are the leanings of Providence, he who is derided by the world for the weaknesses of a superstitious fancy, may in fact have combined all the judgment and intelligence and respectable accomplishments of a discerning and clear-sighted man, with all the devotedness of a humble and submissive piety.

Verses 5–8.—"And the devil, taking him up into an high mountain, shewed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said unto him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them, for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it. If thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Get thee behind me, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." This, of course, was no illusion of the fancy. We mistake the matter if we think that our Saviour did not feel the force of these various temptations. Had He not done so, He would not have been in all points tempted like as we are. We do not understand the nature of the union between the divine and human natures of Christ. We must just take what we find upon this subject, and limit our curiosity by the amount of that which is written. And this much is certain, that He suffered being tempted—He had all the pain of a struggle to undergo; and it was by obedience in the face of difficulty, it was by a high and sustained exercise of principle in the face of allurements—and had the allurements not been felt, there would have been no exercise at all in the work of resisting them—it was, I say, by the force of dutiful sentiment rising superior to all that the tempter and the world could muster up to oppose it, that He earned the reward of righteousness for us, and obtained a highly exalted name which

we are at all times invited to make use of in our prayers, and are told that if we do so they shall rise to the Father, who hath placed the Son on His right hand, with acceptance and success. Take this view of the matter then—that our Saviour actually felt the force of the allurement; and I think that much practical instruction is to be gathered from the way in which He repelled this temptation of the adversary. Does it appear from these verses that He stopped to gaze on the splendid field of contemplation before Him? Did He suffer His thoughts to linger on the beauties of that airy spectacle by which He was surrounded? Did He enter into a deliberate process of calculation, or hesitate for a moment between the call of duty to God and an act of homage to God's presumptuous rival, on the rendering of which all the glory which dazzled so magnificently around Him was offered to gratify and to reward Him? No, my brethren, He does not appear to have ventured Himself with the power of this alluring representation for a single moment. All the strength of His hitherto unconquered nature—all the knowledge He had of the deceitfulness of the tempter—all the consciousness which one would think He might have possessed that the promise of Satan was but a mockery—all this did not embolden Him to the measure of looking for one minute to the vision of loveliness and of grandeur that was thrown around Him; but with all the jealousy of quick and instantly conceived alarm, does He by one summary act dismiss the whole of the flattering temptation away from Him: Get you hence, Satan; I cannot entertain your proposal for a single moment; and with a quotation from Scripture, the very measure by which He repelled every former assault, does He tell Him that He must worship the Lord His God, and Him only He must serve.

This part of the example of our Saviour gives a mighty reinforcement to a prudential lesson often set forth in Scripture respecting the management of temptations. If He would not trifle or delay or make any parrying with temptation, how much more incumbent is it upon us to be prompt

and decisive in our measures with it? If even the mighty Captain of our salvation would not trust Himself with the indulgence of that superb spectacle that was so much fitted to regale the imagination, how much more ought we to dismiss from our hearts the countless vanities that are ever obtruding themselves and offering to take possession of the inner man? Let us suit our proceedings to the mediocrity of our powers. Let us conceive quick and sudden and decisive alarm at every approach of every temptation. Be assured my friends, that it is far safer to dismiss than to tarry with it. Entertain not the deceitful suggestion for a single moment; but recovering the mind to the tone of principle, by an instantaneous reference to the will of God, and the obligations that you owe Him, dismiss every evil instigation by the sentiment that thou must worship the Lord thy God, and Him only thou must serve. If this were the habit of the mind, what a mighty safeguard against temptations you would carry about with you in a world that is full of them. Your tempter does not appear to you in a personal form; but his agency on your hearts is not the less real on that account—nor is the answer less applicable from your mouth than it was from the mouth of the Saviour, Get thee hence, Satan. Rebuke the evil suggestion away from you. Let the mind, by the summary act of that authority which belongs to it, dismiss from its inner chambers every tempting thought, every rising inclination to sin; and while you are called upon to keep your eyes with all diligence from viewing vanity, I also call upon you to keep your hearts with all diligence from dwelling upon vanity. I do not know a single practical direction that you would find of more use for keeping you from what is evil; and we are told that we should cease to do evil, ere we can learn to do well. I know not a more efficient lesson for carrying along with you from the very commencement of the good work of sanctification, and for supporting you through the whole of its subsequent stages. Do, my brethren, act upon it from this moment. Think of the quick and instantaneous movement by which our Saviour put the whole of that

bright and glittering illusion away from Him, which formed the grand conclusive attempt of the adversary to seduce Him from His principles. Go, and do likewise. Keep no measures with temptation. Your safety lies in shunning, and in shutting it out, and in dismissing it from your thoughts. When any gay or flattering imagination gets hold of you—be it wealth, to seduce you from your integrity, or to withdraw you from the present path of your humble and sober-minded, but safe and cautious employments, to some track of ruinous ambition—or be it pleasure, to steal your heart to some object of idolatrous affection—or be it fashion, to tempt you to some act of unlawful conformity to a world lying in wickedness—think, my brethren, of your calling—you are the servants of the Lord; and be ever ready to dismiss the evil suggestion with the answer—I must worship the Lord my God, and Him only I must serve.

Thus much for temptation in the general. But let me say a few words on the particular temptation that is here recorded. One might think that it would be difficult to find a parallel to this temptation in the familiar and every-day history of men—that for this purpose it would be necessary to go to him who stands on the very pinnacle of human society—to the single man of the world, before whom lieth the avenue which promises to conduct him by some strides of mighty and unprincipled violence to universal monarchy. Such a man there lately was, who aspired after all the glory of all the kingdoms upon earth; and in the track of his guilty ambition many, and very many, were the acts of homage which he rendered to the god of this world. In the history of this man, we see at once the power of Satan's temptations and the treachery of his promises; but we mistake it if we think that the passage of our Saviour's history which is now before us does not admit of a wider application. The enlightened Discerner of the human heart will perceive the identity of its passions under all the variety of rank and of circumstances. To regale the appetite for distinction, it is not necessary that man should aspire above the level of this widely extended world: it is

enough that he gain an eminence above the level that is immediately around him. His own confined neighborhood may be all that he knows, and to him it is just as animating a field of ambition as the world is to the mighty conqueror; and therefore, in the very humblest walks of society we may behold the busy working of the same pride, and the same passion, and the same keen and interested rivalship, and the same ardent struggle for superiority, that we read of in the higher game of victory and of empire. And thus it is that the temptation of glory may be carried down to the very basis of society. Men measure themselves by themselves, and compare themselves with themselves; and thus it is that when walking the streets, we may behold the gait and bearing of conscious elevation among the most tattered of our laborers, as well as among the wealthiest of our citizens—for pride may dwell in a cottage as well as in a palace. It sits on the workman's bench as well as on the monarch's throne, and struts driving a flock of sheep as well as at the head of a victorious army.

But in all these cases, the glory we aspire after is a glory we seek from one another. It is the notice, and the homage, and the admiration of men. It is not the glory that cometh from God only; but in giving way to it, we make an idolatrous defection from the great God of heaven and of earth; and to make good this defection, the god of this world plies all his artifices, and brings the flattering prospect of distinction to play upon our fancy, and arrays the perishable splendors of earth with a charm and a stability which do not belong to them; and throws into the far and distant back-ground of our contemplations the certainty of that death which, in a few short years, will blow to pieces the whole of his glittering infatuation, and the loathsomeness of that grave of which one and all of us must be the dumb and the moldering occupiers. Oh! how many resign themselves to his flattering illusions, and crowd the broad way in pursuit of them! And, keenly driven along by some airy specter, the sight of which inflames their ambition, there is no room in the hearts but for the employ-

ment of following after it; and the will of God, and the service of God, and the worship of God, are all trampled upon and renounced in the daily and hourly incense which they offer to some cheating idol of this world. Money, which purchaseth all things, purchaseth distinction also; and this forms the most frequent and powerful instrument by which the great adversary seduces his thousands and tens of thousands from their loyalty to the God of heaven. With this he bribes the vanity of the young in the shape of costly and glittering ornaments—and who can tell how many have been betrayed by the power of this temptation into the surrender of that most graceful of all ornaments—that unsullied purity which when cruelly pressed and prevailed upon has often turned her who was at one time the pride and the promise of a parent's old age into a shame and a bitterness which have brought down his gray hairs with sorrow to the grave. With this he has turned the commercial world into one vortex of driving and impetuous rivalship; and though it be well that each should put forth the might of his hand to the bidden duty of providing for the things of his own house, yet it is not well if, in the pursuit of a keen and straining ambition, simplicity and godly sincerity have been banished from the transactions of business—it is not well if the seducing object of a commanding fortune and a princely retirement, which lies in the vista of futurity before him, shall tempt him to a life of perpetual homage to the glory and good of this world—it is not well if the prospect of some earthly eminence, from which the hand of death will so soon pull him down, shall be spread before him with all the gay coloring of a painted screen, to hide from his view the unfading glories of eternity. And surely, surely, my brethren, if glosses and plausibilities and dexterous concealments of the truth to secure the advantage in a present bargain, or give a favorable turn to the present negotiation—if there be any of you, my friends (and I pray there may be none), who have so far fallen from the lofty principles of a pure and unbending integrity, as to think that all these may be looked upon with levity

and connivance, and that the communications of yea, yea, and nay, nay, when heard in the market-place are to be laughed at as the oddities of Quakerism—why, my brethren, in this case I must say that you are not walking as strangers and pilgrims upon the earth—that you have got among the wiles and entanglements of him who is the arch-enemy of human souls, by whose fascinations it is that you are as effectually surrounded by the mockery of an ideal representation, as the mind of our Saviour when the panorama of a brilliant and alluring world was spread before his contemplation: and you, in pursuit of some airy castle which you may never reach, and which at all events you must soon abandon for the coldness and corruption of the sepulcher, are doing homage to the father of lies, and strewing the altar of his idolatry with those offerings of the ruined soul and its undone eternity, which he exacts from his worshipers.

I cannot bring my observations on this wonderful passage of the Bible to a close without remarking that one harmonious lesson may be gathered out of the three temptations by which our Saviour was assailed. The first is, that no prospect however terrifying, no pain however urgent, no suffering however intense, shall tempt me to do that which is undutiful and against the will of God, for the purpose of escaping the evils of that situation in which I actually find myself. Duty must be done at all hazards—the law of God must be acted upon at every venture—I must not, by any deed of mine, try to help myself out of any distress by the violation of any of the commandments; and under every temptation, the most pressing that can be conceived, it is my part to obey God though He should multiply upon me the severest dispensations, and to trust Him though He should slay me. Conceive a man, then, in a given line of employment, and under temptations to take the advantage which others take, and to alleviate the difficulties of his situation by resorting to the same habits and practices of dishonesty which are frequent among others; and, if acting on the moral to be drawn from the first of

the three temptations, he will struggle with every hardship rather than surrender one iota of his integrity to soften them, and putting his confidence in God, will say, that man liveth not by bread alone, but by every word which proceedeth out of His mouth. But you will say, though he should do no dishonest thing to make his present situation a comfortable and productive one, might not he change that situation—might not he give up the present, with all its certain evils, for another which, for anything he knows, might be free from the hardships that are now pressing upon him? Might not he speculate, and experiment, and venture on some bold and decisive steps to have himself extricated from his present degree of poverty or inconvenience or suffering? Now, if he act on the moral that is to be gathered out of the second temptation, he will make this a question of prudence—he will no more commit himself to uncertainty in the face of known principle, of experience, than our Saviour committed Himself to the air in the face of the known law of gravity—he will mingle the caution of wisdom and of observation with all his deliberations upon this subject; nor by calculating upon any wanton or hazardous enterprise, will he offer to tempt the Lord his God. Now, graft upon these two morals the one that is to be gathered from the third and last temptation, and you will moderate to nothing a man's ambition about a place of eminence and distinction in society. It is very true that on him may be performed, or on him there may not be performed, the truth of the saying—that the hand of the diligent maketh rich; but riches are not what his heart is set upon. He looks to another home, and his eye is filled with the splendors of another inheritance. He acts on the great though simple prospect of eternity; and on the whole you behold a man giving himself to the faithful and diligent and high-principled discharge of all the duties which belong to the line that Providence has assigned to him, and making no rash or unadvised attempts to change it. His heart is free from that ambition after the glories or the distinctions of this world which pierceth man through with many sor-

rows, and has blasted many a precious influence of the word of God, by the cares of life on the one hand, or the deceitfulness of riches on the other. Such, my brethren, I conceive to be the clear line of duty that lies on every individual, and I leave it to you to conceive what a Christian and good and orderly aspect it would throw over the face of the country, were this to become the practical and the universal moral of all its people—were the unbridled rage of commercial enterprise to be tempered by the lessons of this passage. We would see less of goading ambition for a high eminence of wealth among the citizens, and less of that blind and impetuous and miscalculating confidence which tempts so many to acts of desperation, and less of that relaxation of principle and virtue that leads to so many a splendid and guilty, and at length shipwrecked enterprise, signalized by the ruin of many families, while another phœnix with gay and golden plumage rises from the ashes of the devouring conflagration.

SERMON XXII.

[Preached in the Calton, Glasgow, 15th February, 1815.]

II. CORINTHIANS V. 20.

"Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God."

In the prosecution of the following discourse, I shall first consider the entreaty of the text—"Be ye reconciled unto God, as addressed to you by the beseeching voice of a fellow-mortal; and in the second place, I shall consider the warrant given to him by God to address you in this manner—and in virtue of which warrant it is not only he who beseeches you, but God, or Christ, the Son of God, who beseeches you by him,—"As though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled unto God."

Let me, then, in the first place, consider this entreaty of the text as coming upon you through the beseeching voice of a fellow-mortal. It came in this shape from the mouth of Paul to the people whom he addressed in this epistle. It comes in this shape from the mouth of a Christian parent to those children for whose eternal salvation he is bound to labor, and to put forth his every power of earnest and affectionate exhortation. It comes in this shape from one friend to another, in that highest exercise of friendship, when man presses upon his fellow the care of his eternity. And it comes in this shape at the moment in which I am now addressing you, when, knowing as I do that there is an offer within the reach of one and all of you, the neglect of which will sink you into endless and unutterable wo, and the acceptance of which will invest you with all the splendors and all the ever-during felicities of Paradise—I urge it upon your consideration in all its magnitude and in

all its seriousness. I call upon you to come out from the wretched alienation of nature—to give up your enmity against that Being who has your fate and your fortune in His hand, the word of whose power can crush you into annihilation, or transfer you to that awful region where each unrepentant sinner shall take up his bed in hell, and a blackening despair spreads itself over the whole multitude of the damned, because that each and all of them know that a whole eternity of vengeance is in store for them. Ah! my brethren, knowing, as every true minister of the gospel does, that all who refuse the overtures of the gospel are speeding their certain way to this scene of gloomy and interminable suffering; and knowing farther, that all of them have pardon within the reach of their offer, and repentance within the reach of their call. and the Spirit to strengthen them for the work of repentance within the reach of their prayers, and eternal life as the gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord, within the reach of their acceptance—how is it possible in these circumstances, unless he had a heart cruel as death and hard as the nether millstone, how is it possible that he can refrain from pouring all the tenderness of his sympathy upon them, from knocking at the door of every bosom, and praying them to mind the things which belong to their peace? and should he have already set before them the terrors of the law, how can he refrain from telling them that these terrors are only in reserve then for those of them who refuse His kindness now—that their full terror and severity are to be discharged in the other world only on those of them who in this world turn from the tenderness of his entreating voice; but that the time in which he is now standing among them is the accepted time, that the day on which he is now preaching to them is a day of salvation? It is thus impossible that any minister who feels as he ought can abstain from doing among his hearers what Paul did before him, from beseeching them even in his own name, and with the anxiety that he feels for them in his own heart, to be reconciled unto God.

But, my brethren, there is no need of any reconciliation among two parties if there is no quarrel between them; and you may perhaps ask—what is the quarrel between you and God? Who is it among you, I would ask in return, that puts this question? Is it possible that the thief can put this question in the face of a commandment so pointed and so intelligible as this—Thou shalt not steal? Is it possible that the swearer can put this question in the face of a threat so plain and so appalling as this—The Lord will not hold him guiltless who taketh His name in vain? Is it possible that the Sabbath-breaker can put such a question as implies him not to be conscious of any quarrel that God can possibly have with him, in the face of the commandment uttered in thunder from Mount Sinai—Thou shalt sanctify the Sabbath-day, and keep it holy? Is it possible that the liar can put such a question in the face of that solemn charge delivered by God Himself against false witness? Is it possible that the drunkard or unclean person can put such a question when, in the book of Revelation, it is expressly said that all such shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone? And once for all, how is it possible that each or any of these can ever take it into their heads that God has no quarrel with them in the face of the testimony handed down to us by the holy apostle about the works of the flesh—a testimony delivered in language too plain to be put away, when he says of adultery, and fornication, and uncleanness, and lasciviousness, and hatred, and strife, and drunkenness, and revellings, and such like, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God? I cannot conceive, then, that a man guilty of any one of these things should have any doubt of God having a quarrel with him—should have any doubt of its being necessary, in order to obtain the friendship of God, that this quarrel be made up by an act of reconciliation—should have any doubt that some great movement must be made by him in the matters of religion ere he die;—and that unless the offer of the gospel be taken by him—and no man does take this offer who does

not forsake his sins and betake himself to a thorough course of repentance and new obedience—I say, I do not feel that I stand under any necessity of convincing these that there is at this moment a breach between them and God. I am sure that if they are not seared as with a red-hot iron, they will not leave off the consideration of what I am now urging without their consciences rising upon them and charging them with their enmity against God; and upbraiding them with their acts of wickedness in the past time of their lives; and whispering to them on the bed of restlessness where they lie, that if they follow not the call of reconciliation which has been sounded in their ears, they are treasuring up to themselves a more furious wrath and a heavier condemnation. Yes! and let this conscience make them as uneasy as it may, it is but the foretaste of that coming hell where there is a fire that is never quenched, and the corrosion of a tormenting worm that never dies.

But, my brethren, the men whom I am most desirous of convincing at present that there is a real quarrel between them and God, and a real necessity for an act of reconciliation to make the quarrel up, are those who can say with the young man in the gospel—My conscience does not upbraid me with any of these offenses: I am not a drunkard, I am not a thief, I am not a frequenter of any of the haunts of profligacy; I attend ordinances, and there is a decency that spreads itself over the whole of my Sabbath history; I give what I can afford to my poorer brethren, and I am neither an extortioner nor an adulterer, even as some others who are standing beside me, and on whom let the charge of the minister light—for to them, and not to me, does it apply. Now, what I maintain—and I am anxious to make you all understand it—is, that there is not a human being on the face of the earth—there is not a single individual of all its families—there is not one solitary descendant among the generations of the fallen Adam, who, if he have not obeyed the call of my text, is not at this moment at open war with the God who created him. Your conscience may not upbraid you with any of the visible transgressions which

I have now enumerated in your hearing. A sense of decency may keep you from them—the natural feeling of what is becoming and upright may keep you from them—the fear of disgrace, or a constitutional delicacy of sentiment, may keep you from them: but still the quarrel remains with God—if it is not love to Him, and a principle of submission to His law, and such a sense of His authority as reaches to the very thoughts and desires and affections of the inner man, that keep you from them. You, my brethren, if you are not in Christ—if you have never known what it is to be reconciled to God through Him—if you are strangers to His atonement, and to the influences of His promised grace,—the distinct charge I bring against one and all of you—let one man be more decent than his neighbor, and more sober than his neighbor, and more honest than his neighbor as he may—the distinct charge I have to make, and I refer to your own consciences whether the charge be a true one or not, is, that you want this love to God—you do not possess this principle of submission to His law in all things—you have not by nature such a sense of His authority as reaches the thoughts and desires and affections of the inner man. In many outward things you may be better than your neighbors, and your conduct be free from those disgraceful outbreakings which give to men the character of being the lowest and the most profligate in society; but I lay it to your consciences, that though such polluted streams as those do not come out of your hearts, it is only because the channels through which they would run are dammed up by other restraints than by love to God and a regard to the honor of the Lawgiver. In spite of all these restraints, the fountain is polluted—the heart is evil—you have no taste for God—you, every hour of the day, forget God, and prove how little you care for Him. You care for other things more than you care for Him. What these other things are will differ among different individuals—just as idolaters sometimes worship one idol and sometimes another. What the idol is which steals your affections from your lawful Master, I know not: it may be the de-

ceitful wiles of this world among capitalists and thriving tradesmen; it may be the love of distinction among those of most strength and most fame and most talent among you; it may be the vanity of a fine appearance among men-servants; it may be the vanity of dress among maid-servants;—what the precise thing is I know not; but whatever it is, there are thousands against whose characters the world can allege nothing, but who suffer some idol, some vanity, some earthly and perishable object, to take away their affections from God. Whatever the thing be, their heart is with that thing, and not with God. God, who says, Give me thy heart, is robbed of His dues. He sees His children altogether taken up with His gifts, and altogether thinking not and caring not about the Giver. Their affections are after another object than God—their desire is towards another house than that place where His honor dwelleth. Give them all they wish for on this side of the grave, and the other side of the grave—to which, whether they will or not, they are so fast hastening—takes up scarce any of their attention at all, and they are never easier than when they are never thinking of it. This, my brethren, is the description of the great bulk and majority of this world's population. I am not saying that they are all notorious, and profligate, and disreputable characters; but I am saying that they are forgetters of God; and just as if He had no existence at all, do they walk after the counsel of their own hearts, and in the sight of their own eyes.

Now, my brethren, do you call this a trifle? Did you never think there was anything so very bad and so very enormous in all this? I am sure you would think and feel it to be no trifle at all, did you just get the same treatment from another that you give to the God who formed you. Did any of you feed a neighbor, and clothe him, and give him every one article of maintenance; and after all you had done for him, did you come to the knowledge that this said neighbor—quite happy in eating your bread, and in wearing your raiment, and in making use of all the comforts and necessaries you bestowed upon him—did not, at

the same time, carry in his heart the slightest regard to you the giver of all this. Did you come to know, that, so far from this, he made no scruple of just doing what he liked best himself, and asked not and cared not what it was that you would like him to do. Did you come to know that he could not bear the thoughts of you, and was never in greater ease of mind than when he drove you out of his recollections altogether.—Why, you would think this hard treatment indeed, from the man who lived because you furnished him with all the means of living, who was kept up in a decent appearance among his neighbors because you supplied him with all that he stood in need of, who got from you the food that sustained him, and the clothing that covered him, and the fuel that warmed him, and the house that lodged him. Well, then, just give the same fair dealing to God. Is it not hard, and exceeding hard—will it not appear a foul and unnatural crime in the high records of heaven—will the pure eye of angels who love God, and delight to serve Him, not see it to be a great and a crying deformity in every one of your characters, that God should give you every breath, should minister to you every comfort, should hold you in life, and in all that is necessary to life, and that you all the while, with your forms of prayer, and your decency of ordinances, and your being as good or better than your neighbors, and some few such points and accomplishments of character as these, should at the same time give God no place in your hearts, and have all your affections turned in dislike, or at least in indifference, away from Him?

I can assure you my brethren, that whatever you may think of this, God Himself thinks it no trifle to be treated in this manner. He claims your love, He requires it—He says that forgetfulness of Him is one of the most hell-deserving crimes in the awful catalogue of human guilt—He expressly says, in the book of Psalms, that the nations who forget Him shall be turned into hell; and He bids you consider, ye who forget God, lest He tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver. This is the quarrel, my

brethren, between God and man; and there is not a single individual of the species, who, if he remain what nature made him, is not included in it. "There is none that understandeth; there is none that seeketh after God." This is the mighty burden of the controversy He has with you—this is the breach between Him and the sinful creatures He has formed—this the awful gulf of separation that cuts off every one of us from the Father of our spirits; and to you whom I am now addressing, to every one of you who are still strangers to the faith of the gospel, and have not sought, and have not found, all your peace with the Lawgiver, through Jesus Christ our Lord—I say that to you there is a most pressing need of reconciliation; I beseech you to take to it immediately.

If on some night of darkness I met the friend of my heart walking the road which led to a precipice, I should tell him of his danger, and point out the safe direction for him to take himself to. If he refused to hear me, I should repeat to him my earnest assurances of his danger. If he would not believe me, I should insist with all the tones of truth and tenderness. If he persisted in his obstinacy, I would positively attempt to force him away from the path he was walking in. If I was not strong enough, I would fall on my knees to him—I would try to overpower him by my entreaties and my warnings—I would do all that friendship could do to turn him from his infatuation; nor would I leave him till either I had accomplished my purpose, or he had fallen a victim to his rashness and his folly. In like manner does the Christian minister open his eyes upon the people whom he addresses. In this dark world the road to heaven is often not perceived, and not walked in. Christ says—"I am the way; by me if any man enter in he shall be saved. Let him believe my testimony—let him listen to my calls—let him submit himself to my gospel—let him make himself over to me, as the Saviour whose blood has redeemed him, and whose Spirit, if he pray for it in faith, will renew him and make him meet for the inheritance. Let him do this, and he is reconciled unto

God, and set on the only way to a happy eternity." Well, then, does the embassador of Christ see any of you in this way? fulfilling the desires of your own hearts—laying up for the world, and making no provision for that eternity which is coming so rapidly upon you—continuing in your iniquities, instead of turning from them unto Christ—building yourselves up in the deceitful security that you will get to heaven with a few moral decencies, that make you pass in society with a character as fair and as respectable as that of your neighbors around you, at the very time that God is forgotten, and His love has no operation within you, and His way of salvation by His Son is not acknowledged or walked in, and His law, however much it may be fulfilled in some external points, is not present to the heart, and brings not the whole body, soul, and spirit, to the captivity of His obedience. If this be the situation of any who now hear me, then has your minister a right to say that you are walking in a miserably wrong way, and to beg that you will no longer walk in it. Turn ye, turn ye to the direction of safety; believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and ye shall be saved. This is the only name given under heaven. If this name be not cordially embraced—if you do not rest for salvation upon him—if you do not build your hope of forgiveness upon His sacrifice—if the faith that is in you do not work a good evidence to the operation of that Spirit which is promised to all who believe, to turn them from all sin, and lead them to the love and the practice of all righteousness;—if this be indeed your state, you are out of the way—you are still in the dangerous situation of being unreconciled to God. In this situation your minister meets with you, and Sabbath after Sabbath you are within the reach of his hearing, and he tells you of your danger. He looks upon you as his friends and acquaintances; and how, I ask you, can he bear it—that people whom he meets every day on the road—people whom he calls upon in their houses—people with whom he should like to exchange visits—people whose health and prosperity he rejoices in, and whose sickness or misfortunes would give him pain;—how

can he bear to think that they should be walking, and not be warned of it, in the broad way which leadeth to destruction?

Shall he feel a sympathy for the little ailments and calamities of this life, and shall he stand unmoved when he sees you, by your indifference to the truth, by your neglect of the great salvation, by your resistance of every offer to be reconciled to God in Christ, walking so miserably astray and running on the path that leads to evil, and heaping up to yourselves wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God? It may be often, or it may be seldom, that your minister and you meet with each other; but when you do meet, it is on terms of peace and civility—every appearance of cordiality in your salutations, and every appearance of kindness in your mutual compliments and inquiries. How, then, can he bear to see any of you posting with all speed to a condemned and undone eternity? Though he should himself get to the heaven he is aspiring after, is that any reason why he should tolerate the idea of you, my friends, persisting in enmity with God—of the hell that will be your portion, and the gulf of everlasting separation that will then be placed between him and you? It were only the want of faith which could make him sit at ease under a contemplation so painful as the one that I am now presenting; but knowing, as he does, the awful realities of the other world, he were untrue to his Master's cause if he did not bring every engine to bear upon you; and though with a voice more tender than human sympathy ever prompted, he called on you from this pulpit to turn and be reconciled—though he went from house to house, and with all earnestness beseeched you to be reconciled—though he fell on his knees before you, and entreated you with tears to mind the things which belong to your peace lest they be for ever hid from your eyes—he would just be doing what Paul did before him, when he prayed his people in Christ's stead to be reconciled unto God.

You will observe, my brethren, that if God refused to receive those who call upon Him—if He still stood out on

the dignity of His law, and said, I will not come to terms with those who have broken and insulted it—if there was any unwillingness on His part to make it up with you—then it might be vain for me, or for any minister, to call on the one party to be reconciled, while the other party would not admit of reconciliation. But this is not the state of the case; God is willing. He Himself made and proclaimed the way of return by which sinners have free access to His throne; and all who will are invited to come and drink of the waters of life freely. Christ, the way, is offered unto all; and it was God who so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. Go not, then, to charge God with unwillingness to be reconciled. The want of willingness is on your part, and not upon His. Come unto Him through the appointed Mediator. I beseech you to do so. Take to the faith and the following of Christ, and you are safe. If your reconciliation to God have not yet been made, it is because you are unwilling. The unwillingness lies with you; and do not charge it upon God, who calls on every one of you to repent, and be reconciled, and live—who swears by Himself that He has no pleasure in the death of a sinner—who, for the very purpose of delivering you from this death, sent you a mighty Redeemer, who gave this account of Himself, that He came not to destroy men's lives but to save them. By Him the ransom of iniquity is paid, and a way of acceptance is opened, and every thing is made clear with God, and there is free access to Him through a Mediator; and I again pray you in Christ's stead, that ye be reconciled unto God.

I have left myself little time for the second head of discourse, in which I was to lay it before you, that while I beseeched you with my own voice, God beseeched you by me. It is He who has given the warrant for all this free and earnest invitation. My urgency on this subject is the urgency of Him who has commissioned me to present to you the word of this great salvation. I am only the instrument of God in this matter; and what I want to press upon

you is, that He, the mighty Sovereign of heaven and of earth, is at this moment employed, through His ministers and His Bibles, not merely in threatening, not merely in commanding, not merely in issuing His solemn proclamations from hence, that all men should repent; but, more wonderful and more affecting than all this, He puts Himself forth in the attitude of beseeching you to be reconciled. He feels toward you all the longing anxiety of a father bereaved of his children, and He implores your return to Him. He beckons your approach to Him—He waves the signal of a most gracious and willing invitation, and says, "Look unto me, all ye ends of the earth, and be ye saved." He tries to soften the sinner's heart by the tenderness of His imploring voice, and prays him to be reconciled. And be assured, my brethren, that however much I beseech you, however earnestly I have your salvation at heart, however anxiously I implore you to return from the way of hostility against God, to the way of friendship and of peace with Him—be assured that I fall far short of the earnestness, and sincerity, and anxious desire after you of my Master, Christ Jesus. He is invisible in the heavens; but it is your part, though you see Him not, to believe in Him; and it is only the want of belief that can take away from the force of this affecting argument. Were He to appear in person amongst you, vested with the whole power of heaven and earth, mighty to save, and entreating you to return, and to take to Him as your Redeemer, and to be reconciled unto God, who, if you believe in Christ, will not impute unto you your trespasses—I say, were He to do all this, could you possibly stand out against such powerful entreaties and solicitations? And what else, then, is it but the want of faith which makes you to refuse me now, when you have not Christ in person to entreat you? If you really believed that He was in heaven, and that He was there managing for the interests of all who put their trust in Him, and that He was carrying on a government upon earth, and employing ministers and Bibles as agents for gaining subjects to His kingdom, and for turning perishing sinners to the love and obedience

of His Gospel, then would you feel that it was not I who beseeched you, but Christ who beseeched you by me. Now, I call on you to believe this. On the authority of my text I call you—Christ speaketh there, and what He utters is an actual prayer to you, that you would be reconciled unto God. And what is more, God speaketh there—I and the Father am one, says the Saviour; and such is the unity of mind and of purpose between them, that a call from Christ is a call from God. And accordingly, what do we read in the text? God beseeching you—the Lord of heaven and earth descending to beseech you—He whom you have so deeply offended, whom in the past time of your lives you have forgotten every hour, whose holy law you have trampled upon and put far away from you—He before whom you stand with a load of sins calling for vengeance, in what situation does the text represent Him? The mighty God who fills all space, and reigns in majesty over all worlds, standing at the door of the sinner's heart, humbling Himself to the language of entreaty, beseeching the sinner to come and be reconciled to Him, begging for admittance, and protesting that if you only come unto Him through Christ, He is willing to forgive all, and to forget all. Oh! my brethren, ought not this to encourage you? Yes! and if you refuse the encouragement, it ought also to fill you with terror. The terrors of the Lord are doubtless sometimes preached to you, and I am now preaching to you the goodness and the tenderness of the Lord; but be assured that this goodness, so far from setting aside the terrors, will, if despised and rejected by you, give them their tenfold aggravation. Oh! what an awful weight of condemnation it brings on a sinner's head, that he persists in his iniquities in the face of so much goodness—in the face of all the opportunities that are held out to him of obtaining pardon for the whole guilt of the past, and strength for the whole reformation of the future—in the face of the repeated calls with which God, by His Bibles and His ministers, is at all times plying him. And be most certain, my brethren, that if this gospel be not the savor of life to you, it will be the

savor of death to you. It will add to the weight of your reckoning that you have sinned, and persisted in sin, and kept in a state of rebellion against your Maker, in the midst of despised warnings and slighted invitations, and unheeded encouragements, and neglected opportunities. Happy those who are constrained by all this encouragement; but what will become of those who reject it? What will become of you, if the call and entreaty I have now sounded in your ears shall be found to have had no influence upon you? Look forward to the day of judgment, and when the high matters of God and man are reasoned over there, tell me which of the two shall have the plea upon their side? Tell me what you can possibly say then, if you refuse now the voice of a God beseeching you to be reconciled? You must stand in silence and confusion; but He will be justified when He speaketh, and be clear when He judgeth—"I proclaimed a law, and you brake it; I appointed a Mediator, and you refused Him; I knocked at the door of your hearts, and you gave me no admittance; I beseeched you to be reconciled, and you turned away from me." Oh! hold out no longer, my brethren! Harden not your hearts as in the provocation! Stay not till a more convenient season. Listen to Him now, I say, and make not your hard and impenitent hearts still more hard and more impenitent by refusing Him.

And now, my brethren, what use are you to make of all this that has now been delivered in your hearing? Often, it is to be presumed, has your minister urged the terrors of the Lord upon you; and let me tell you with all earnestness, that if you keep on the ground of rebellion against God, or even forgetfulness of him, you are on ground, where if death find you, it will hurry you into the presence of an incensed Lawgiver, from whence you will pass into the dreary and interminable sufferings of a hopeless eternity; and who is there among you stout-hearted enough to dwell with the devouring fire? who of you can choose to lie down amongst everlasting burnings? But I have this day told you more than this.—I have attempted to assure

you, that God has no pleasure in so awful a catastrophe; and while you are in the land of living men, he plies you with the calls to return, and with the assurances of pardon. He is willing at this moment to receive every one of you: He holds out His Son as a propitiation for the sins that are past: He invites you to come and have all the guilt of your manifold iniquities washed out in the blood of the Lamb: He has already given His Son for you; and as He has done so much, He is still ready to do more—to give you through that Son a full forgiveness, and an abundant supply of the Spirit, and the effectual washing of regeneration, and such a renewal by the power of the Holy Ghost, as will make you from this time forward hate all sin, and aspire after the love and the practice of all righteousness. How is it possible that you can stand unmoved under the power of an argument so touching? Do you know the situation you occupy? Do you know that death, which has already swept away so many generations from the face of the world, will in a few little years make sure work of every one of you, and lay you side by side in the sepulchers of loneliness and corruption? What are you about, ye living men, that you are so losing time, and so throwing your opportunities away from you, and so keeping wedded to this wretched world that is soon to be burnt up, and to those pleasures of sin which are but for a season, and will leave nothing but remorse and painfulness behind them? Do you remember the parable of the fig-tree, on which fruit was sought and no fruit was found, and it was proposed that it should be cut down, for why should it cumber the ground which it occupied? But the proposal was put off for a little time; and it was dressed, and dug about, and had manure put around it—and for another year it was left alone, that if it should bear fruit, good and well, but if not, then let it be cut down. And this, my brethren, is the interesting point at which you stand. You are still let alone; and God has given you health and opportunity to come within the reach of another invitation; and the arguments of the gospel have once more been applied to your

consciences; and you have no pretext whatever for not stirring yourselves, for God has declared His perfect willingness to receive every one of you, if you come unto Him in faith and in repentance. And should there be no fruit from all these repeated applications—should all the earnestness that has been spent upon you have been given to the wind—should the word heard be like water spilt upon the ground, and have fallen without efficacy on hearts blinded by the god of this world, and utterly indisposed to abandon its vanities and its pleasures—should the voice lifted up in your hearing fall as fruitlessly on your ears as the voice lifted up in a wilderness—then, my brethren, for any thing you know, the last experiment has been made upon you, and the last arrow has been shot at you, and the last call of tenderness you may ever hear has reached your senses, while your heart has remained as shielded and impenetrable as before; and the kind Saviour, who is still as merciful a High Priest as ever—seeing the determined obstinacy, and self-deceit, and incurable delusion of your souls, may be saying of you what He said of Jerusalem, "O ye people, ye people, I would have gathered you together as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, but ye would not; O had you minded the things which belong to your peace, but now they are for ever hid from your eyes."

Let me hope better things of you, my brethren. Let me hope that all this tenderness is not lost upon you. Let me trust that in many a soul of many a hearer there is a movement towards God. I see not the heart of any of you; but if a single sigh after repentance is now lifting from any one of them, if a single purpose of repentance is now forming—though I see it not, God sees it; and with all the eagerness of a father after one of his lost and alienated children, will He descend from the eminence of His glory, and run to meet you, though you be far off from Him, and stretch out the hand of encouragement to receive you, and welcome you with a thousand greetings to the household of the faithful, and perfect that which concerns you, and minister abundant pardon through the blood of Him who has mag-

nified His law and made it honorable, and sustain you by the constant supplies of His grace, and by the daily refreshments of that Spirit who can alone strengthen you for all obedience. Do, my brethren, stir yourselves to the mighty work of repentance. It is comparatively but a poor argument to allege that by so doing you will send joy into the heart of your minister, or of any fellow-mortal—you will rejoice the hearts of angels who are now standing on the high eminences of heaven, and casting their benevolent eyes on you, and would smile complacency on the prospect of another penitent to join their happy number; and there is not one of you, though worthless as the worst of sinners, and poor as beggary itself, who may not, this very day, by the softening of his heart into the repentance of the gospel, spread joy over the wide circle of heaven's benignant family.

And having asked you to begin the good course, let me conclude with the positive requirement which our Saviour laid upon the people He called, even at the very outset of their discipleship. In coming to Christ, forsake all. You cannot too early begin the work of struggling with your iniquities. Nay, if you are not so struggling, the invitations of the gospel have had no effect upon you. He who turneth to Christ, turneth from his iniquities. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners—give up all that your conscience tells you to be wrong—seek after all that your conscience tells you to be right—enter from this moment into a course of decided turning from all wickedness, and of decided earnestness in all the new obedience of the gospel. God will not despise the day of small things. He will not turn in indifference away from your first attempts to seek after Him, if haply you may find Him. Cherish no doubt of your forgiveness through the merits of His Son—if you betake yourselves to the leaving off of all that He bids you leave off, and to the doing of all that He bids you do; and could we only get the matter begun, with such a principle and such a purpose at the bottom of it, I would not be afraid of your stopping short: but, committing yourselves to the guidance of Him

who is able to strengthen you for the doing of all things, you would abound more and more every day, and experience all those changes of soul and of spirit, as well as of body, which make you meet for the Jerusalem above.

SERMON XXIII.

[After his settlement in Glasgow, Dr. Chalmers was excessively annoyed by the accumulation of all kinds of secular business which was laid upon the city ministers. Resolved to proclaim as widely as possible the wrongs thus done to the Christian ministry, and at least to work out a way of deliverance for himself, he carried the subject to the pulpit. He had intended to preach twice upon this topic. The effect of the first sermon—the one now published—was such that he was dissuaded from pursuing it—abundant assurances being tendered to him that he would not be so interfered with in the future. So strongly, however, had he felt upon this matter, that I find among his manuscripts the introduction to a sermon intended to be a sequel to the one now published, written about the time that he was appointed to the Church of St. John's, and which he had purposed to deliver to the Tron Church congregation before parting from them. Owing, I presume, to an urgency similar to that which had been brought to bear upon him previously, his intention in this second instance also was laid aside.]

ACTS VI. 2.

"Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables."

It is a very possible thing to denounce a vicious system without bearing hard on so much as one of the individual agents of that system. It is a very possible thing to attack a great public corruption—ay, and that, too, with all the honest vehemence of sentiment, while all that vehemence of passion which discharges itself in the severities of pointed and personal application may be utterly kept away. Surely it is quite possible to be on the one hand zealously affected in a good thing, and on the other hand to bear in constant and effectual remembrance that the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God. May we therefore never let down our zeal for the good work of a most desirable and much called for reformation, and at the same time never suffer the entrance into our bosoms for an ingredient so hateful as contempt towards any one established dignity,

or the virulence of exasperated feeling towards the perversities or the willful blindness of any one individual.

I hold it fair to say, in relation to the case now before us, that were I at all disposed to wreak anger or give vent to any one of my vindictive sensibilities on this subject, I should be at a loss to find out the human being on whom I could make to rest the burden of my indignation. I positively cannot tell who have the blame of this mischievous system. Not altogether the existing generation of official men—for they received it as a legacy from their predecessors. Not altogether the senators of our land, who are so heedlessly accumulating upon the ministers of religion such an oppressive load of signatures and certificates, and other underling secularities, as, if persisted in much longer, will bury the sacredness of the character altogether, and transform him who sustains it into a mere agent of police or of civil regulation—for the unseen field of our labors is too far removed from their habitual observation to make them at all aware of the mischief they are inflicting on the character of our people, and the best interests of our country. Not altogether the ministers themselves, whose task it is to watch over their assigned department, and in the duteous spirit of loyalty, to tell our state, our governors, and our patriots, how hurtfully this invasion bears on the usefulness of their order; for in truth the progress of the mischief has been most insinuating—it has come upon us in the way of gradual accumulations. At each distinct step it wore the aspect of a benevolent and kind accommodation to the humbler orders of society—and so the matter has swelled and multiplied till the upshot of this kind and benevolent system has been that in our larger towns it has effected, as to every moral and every spiritual purpose, an entire separation of the minister and the people from each other; and the man whose business it was in the olden time to prepare for your Sabbath instruction, and to watch over your souls, and to hold individual conference with every earnest inquirer, and to ply his daily attendance upon your deathbeds, and by his yearly presence to shed a holy influence

over your streets and your families, and to brandish all that spiritual armor which the great Master of the Church has put into his hand for reclaiming the profligate and overawing the audaciously wicked, and arresting the mad career of licentiousness, and so manifesting the truth to the consciences of men as to force their willing consent to the faith and the obedience of the gospel—the man, I say, who had this for his business then has got other business now to engross and to occupy him. The kind and the benevolent system has put other services into his hand, and he is far too busy with the performance of these modern and superinduced duties, which have been grafted on our clerical office, to have either time or strength for the driveling exercises of a former generation—and so it is, my brethren, that now-a-days among the other boasts of this enlightened age, you will find he can boast a chamber which has upon it as much of the important aspect of business as any of you, and he is as deeply involved in the whirl of secular employments, and is as constantly beset with the urgency of most clamorous demands on his time and his attention; and that inner apartment which was wont to be the scene of meditations sustained for hours together, and out of which the well-built argument, and the powerful remonstrance, and the pathetic expostulation, issued forth in a refreshing stream of Christian and moral influence upon the people, is now laid open to the din of every invading footstep, and has all its thoughtfulness and all its tranquillity chased away from it, and the whole of that machinery by which the products of the mind are accumulated through the week, and brought forth with the return of every hallowed day to nourish and to edify a congregation, is now most cruelly broken up. Ay, my brethren, and if you have any sympathy at all with the woes of that dark period in history when the unlettered hordes of the North burst on the polished domains of art and of learning, and in one tide of ruthless invasion laid low all the vestiges of refinement, and bore down all the aspiring energies of genius, then let me point your attention to another invasion just as Gothic in its char-

acter, though not so widely visible in its display—an invasion by which the door of many an intellectual retreat is now no longer a security to its occupier, and the truly British maxim of every man's house being his castle is trampled upon in all the wantonness of an arbitrary and assumed discretion by the constituted authorities of the land. Yes! and be they the rulers of our kingdom or the rulers of our cities, who give their seal to these distressing inroads on the peacefulness of a studious habitation, all the power which sanctions so glaring an injustice, and all that pageantry of official grandeur by which the solemn air of legality is thrown around it, only serve to confirm the resemblance which has now occurred to me; nor, should this shameful claim be persisted in, shall I ever cease to look upon it as the triumph of strength over principle, the mournful ascendency of vulgar power over the high prerogatives of the understanding.

In the prosecution of the following discourse, I shall first submit to your attention a short narrative of all the exactions and the services by which the ministers of the gospel in this our land are withdrawn from prayer and from the ministry of the word. I shall, in the second place, attempt to demonstrate the evils of this system; and, in the third place, to recommend some palliatives by which, till it be conclusively done away, a defense against these evils might be reared in behalf of our parish and our congregation.

I proceed, in the first place, to the narrative.

Among the people of our busy land, who are ever on the wing of activity, and whether in circumstances of peace or of war, are at all times feeling the impulse of some national movement or other, it is not to be wondered at that a series of transactions should be constantly flowing between the metropolis of the empire and its distant provinces. There are the remittances which pass through our public offices from soldiers and sailors in the service of Government to their relations at home. There are letters of inquiry sent back again from their relations. There is all the correspondence, and all the business of draughts, and other ne-

gotiations which come upon the decease of a soldier or a sailor. There is the whole tribe of hospital allowances. There is the payment of pensions, and a variety of other items, of which I am sorry that I have kept no register, but which even though I had, it might have been improper to suspend your attention any longer, upon so strange and tedious an enumeration.

Now, here lies the essence of the mischief. The individuals with whom these different transactions are carried on need to be verified. They live in some parish or other —and who can be fitter for the required purpose than the parish minister? He is, or he ought to be, acquainted with every one of his parishioners; and this acquaintance, which he never can obtain in towns but by years of ministerial exertion amongst them, is turned to an object destructive of the very principle upon which he was selected for such a service. It saddles him with a task which breaks in upon his ministerial exertions—which widens his distance from his people, and in the end makes him as unfit for certifying a single clause of information about them as the most private individual of his neighborhood.

Yet so it is. The minister is the organ of many a communication between his people and the offices in London —and many a weary signature is exacted from him, and a world of management is devolved upon his shoulders; and instead of sitting like his fathers in office, surrounded by the theology of present or of other days, he must now turn his study into a counting-room, and have his well-arranged cabinet before him, fitted up with its sections and its other conveniences for notices and duplicates, and all the scraps and memoranda of a manifold correspondence.

But the history does not stop here. The example of Government has descended, and is now quickly running through the whole field of private and individual agency. The negotiation of the business of prize moneys is one out of several examples which occur to me. The emigration of new settlers to Canada is another. It does not appear that there is any act of Government authorizing the agents

in this matter to fix on the clergy as the organs, either for the transaction of their business, or the conveyance of their information to the people of the land. But they find it convenient to follow the example of Government, and have accordingly done so—and in this way a mighty host of schedules and circulars and printed forms, with long blank spaces which the minister will have the goodness to fill up according to the best of his knowledge, come into mustering competition with the whole of his other claims and his other engagements. It is true that the minister in this case may decline to have the goodness; but then the people are apprized of the arrangement, and trained as they have been too well to look up to the minister as an organ of civil accommodation, will they lay siege to his dwelling-house, and pour upon him with their inquiries, and the cruel alternative is laid upon him either to obstruct the convenience of his parishioners, and scowl them away from his presence, or to take the whole weight of a management that has been so indiscreetly and so wantonly assigned to him. In the painful struggle between the kindliness of his nature and the primitive and essential duties of his office, he may happen to fix on the worse and not on the better part. It was not reason that even for such a service I should leave the ministry of the word and prayer—but in an unlucky moment I have done so, along, I believe, with the vast majority of my brethren; and out of the multitude of other doings from this source of employment alone, which are now past and have sunk into oblivion, the simple achievement of seventy signatures in one day is all that my dizzy recollection has been able to keep and to perpetuate.

If for the expediting of business we are to be made free with even by private individuals, it is not to be wondered at if charitable bodies should at all times look for our subserviency to their schemes and their operations of benevolence. When a patriotic fund, or a Waterloo subscription, blazes in all the splendor of a nation's munificence and a nation's gratitude before the public eye, who shall have the hardihood to refuse a single item of the bidden co-operation

that is expected from him? Surely such a demand as this is quite irresistible, and accordingly from this quarter too a heavy load of consultations and certificates, with the additional singularity of having to do with the drawing of money, and the keeping of it in safe custody, and the dealing out of it in small discretionary parcels, according to the needs and circumstances of the parties—all, all is placed upon the shoulders of the already jaded and overborne minister.

But the greater number of these employments, it may be thought, originated in our state of war—and now that war is at an end, they will cease with the final winding-up of the old system. Oh, no! my brethren. This great event which has brought peace to the whole country, has brought no peace to the minister. In some unlucky hour or other the Secretary-at-War seems to have had a conversation with the Secretary for the Home Department, and to have supplied him with the mischievous hint of how vastly convenient a set of people were we ministers. I do not know if this be the exact account of the matter; but thus much I know, that some such hint has been given, and that the hint is most assuredly acted upon—for the practice has now fairly got in, when the right man can not be found for doing any piece of provincial business, just to hinge it all upon the minister. Ay, my brethren, and should you hear of your minister sitting in judgment on the qualifications of hawkers and spirit-dealers, and of certifying accordingly, you must just put it down among the first-fruits of that precious system which has lately been devised, and is now in a state of hopeful perseverance, for conducting the matters of our home administration.

I know not where this is to end, or what new and unheard of duties are still in reserve for us; but thus much I know, that they are in the way of an indefinite accumulation. I have heard obscurely of some very recent addition to our burdens, but of what it particularly is I have not got the distinct or the authentic information. I am not civilian enough to know if even an Act of Parliament carry such

an omnipotence along with it as to empower this strange series of wanton and arbitrary infringements on the individual hours and liberties of clergymen; but I am patriot enough to feel that the rulers of our country are, for a trifling accommodation which they should contrive to find somewhere else, bartering away the best interests of its people—that through the side of its public instructors they are reaching a blow to the morality and principle of the commonwealth—that by every such impolitic enactment as I have now attempted to expose, they are slackening the circulation of Christianity and of all its healthful and elevating influences amongst our towns and our families—that they are sweeping away from the face of every larger city the best securities for order and contentment and loyalty; nor should I wonder if, in some future period of turbulence and disorder, they shall rue the infatuation which led them so to tamper with the religion of our land by the inroads they are now making on the duties, and the cruel profanation they are now inflicting on the sacredness of its officiating ministers.

I now pass from the imposition laid on the clergy by government to another set of impositions still more grievous and intolerable—impositions, in virtue of which the city of our habitation would strip its ministers of all the comfort and all the privileges of a home—impositions by which you would turn what ought to be a life of tranquillity into a life of tumult and distraction—impositions by which you would commit to your Christian teachers the burden of services which others should have borne, and would offer to degrade them into a truckling subserviency upon your accommodation, and would do what the sons of liberal and generous accomplishment lift up their hand in astonishment at being told of—would force an unhallowed entrance into the retreats of contemplation, and beset the study of a clergyman with a tribe of invasions so boisterous and unseemly that you would refuse an admittance for them into your own counting-houses. I will not detach a single feature from this representation—nor shall I ever cease to assert

for the labors of the mind that respect and that pre-eminence which have been hitherto withheld from them. I know it well that upon this subject there is a very heavy and a very general obstuseness, that the processes of thought are not understood by those with whom we have to deal, that they do not readily perceive the extent of that mischief which might be wrought by a single interruption—how one painful collision with some clamorous and dissatisfied petitioner is enough to turn the inner-chamber of the mind into a chaos of disorder, and to unstring for a day the whole of its delicate machinery. All this, if poured into the ear of a literary man, or addressed to a reading and a cultivated public, would meet at once their discernment; and in their intelligent sympathy some recompense would be gotten for the suffering complained of. But O, how cold and how comfortless it feels when, in the work of vindicating the prerogative of intellectual labor, one cannot but perceive that he is lifting up his voice in a wilderness—that the whole stream of his utterance on the subject plays upon the hearer like the gibberish of an unknown tongue—that an aspect of dull and unmeaning wonderment is all the effect which your demonstrations can produce upon them—that no access can be opened up for your argument to understandings which look as if they were overborne by the leaden influences of a Bœotian atmosphere—and how freezing the mortification is, none but he who has experienced it can tell, when, on pleading this fine and eloquent cause with one on whom wealth has conferred its elevation, or over whom office has spread its sparkling investiture, it is found that all is deafened and absorbed by a mind steeped in sordidness, or trenched in all the habits and in all the conceptions of an invincible plebeianism.

But let me take up this part of my narrative. The benevolent citizens of a former age have thrown an illustration over this our town by the charities they have bequeathed to it, and they have devolved upon the clergy much of the management and much of the patronage of these charities. Now, before I proceed a single inch farther

in my statement, I must here remind you that the question at present is not as to the benefit or the wisdom of any one of our institutions—it is as to the people on whom should be placed the burden of their manifold and ever-recurring agency. The institutions are there, and no breath, either of contempt or of obloquy, from me, shall ever tarnish the memory of their founders. I join issue with the warmest and most enthusiastic admirer of these philanthropic endowments, in the principle that the business of every one of them must be done—ay, and ought to be done most duly, most vigilantly, most conscientiously. The only alternative betwixt us—and I call your distinct attention to it—is from what quarter of society are the doers to be furnished? Whether it is the time of a clergyman, or the time of a private citizen, that is to be put into requisition for this object? Is the encroachment to be made on the public services of the one, or on the business and relaxation, and family enjoyments of the other? The work must be done; and the question that now lies in the ante-chamber of your mind, and for which I am knocking at the door, and soliciting you to step forward and favor me with a deliverance, is, shall it be done at the expense of a great public interest, which is enough, and more than enough, to occupy all the laborers who are attached to it? or shall it be done, at the expense of a little ease and a little conveniency, by another set of laborers? This is the state of the competition. These are the real terms of the controversy, of which I shall keep a firm hold, and to which, at every step in the progress of the argument, I shall never cease to recall you. I am aware of the clamoring that has been raised upon this subject, and of the false glare that has been thrown around it to bewilder the public understanding, and how the minister who proposes to retire from the business of a charity is maligned as an enemy to the charity itself, and —as if he had no other field of usefulness to cultivate, and no other walk of duty to move in, and no other public service, the claims of which laid it most imperiously upon him to husband all the time and all the strength that he

was master of—his individual withdrawment from some one subordinate employment, which hundreds could manage and could execute, is counted upon as a dead loss to the good and the interest of society. Now, all I aim at by this, my brethren, is to summon your minds to the exercise of a just calculation, to look how the real state of the alternative lies, to show you that the charity itself is kept in all the entireness of its unbroken claim on the protection of the community—that the question is not as to the expediency of the endowment at all, but it is whether for its required agency men are to be secluded from a prior field of benevolent occupation, or men are to be taken, for the time that might well be spared from business and recreation, out of the ranks of ordinary citizenship? Whether the public, for the presence of the clergy in your halls, and their exertions in your committees of management, is to lose a portion of those peculiar services which, from the days of apostolical institution, they are destined to perform? or whether the public, by the substituted exertions of others, is, without the necessity of so cruel and so injurious a sacrifice of its best interests, to reap a clear addition to the tribute which it draws from the spirit and the patriotism of its members? —in one word, the question is, whether one good thing shall be done for society at the expense of another good thing, or both shall be rendered to it in the shape of two distinct and unmutilated offerings? When I tell you, my brethren, that I am for both, and that the whole drift of my argument is on the side of two offerings instead of one, you will learn how to appreciate that misconstruction by which the retirement of clergymen from the secularities of public benevolence is interpreted into a measure of hostility against the public weal, in any of its departments; and should you, my friends, ever hear this good evil-spoken of, you, I trust, will not be put out of the plainest maxims of calculation by such an outcry as this, with all the currency that has been impressed upon it, and all the reinforcement it has gotten from the ceaseless quavers, both of male and of female sentimentalism.

I trust, therefore, that nothing more is necessary for making good this part of my argument, than a simple computation of the time by which the service of these various institutions is made to encroach on the other duties and exercises of clergymen. To this point I cannot speak from personal experience; for feeling as I have all along done, that the requisitions in question were more honored in the breach than the observance, I have declined a compliance with them; but I am only speaking, you will observe, of the requisitions of bodily attendance. I am only speaking of that branch of the duties, the performance of which calls for the transferrence of his person from one place to another, and from the drudgery of which a man can defend himself by the simple act, or rather by the no act, of sitting still. I am speaking of these constant draughts upon his bodily presence, which if he made it a point of conscience to answer, he behoved week after week, and day after day, to be in a state of endless locomotion. As it has been my habit to dishonor these draughts, I cannot furnish you with any estimate of the labor they exact, from my actual performance of it; but if I may judge from the exceeding number of printed circulars which come in by hourly arrival, and keep up upon me at all times a close and a well-supported assault of intimations, I am sure, though without the experience of any actual doings in this way—I am perfectly sure that were I to obey the every call of these winged messengers, and to ply my weary round among all the committees which they announce to me, and to take my every turn of the bidden attendance, and to give my mind to every subject of every deliberation we are expected to share in, and to bow my neck to the burden of all the directorships and secretaryships and president and vice-presidentships which are habitually laid upon us—then, my brethren, might I retire from the ministry of the word and prayer altogether, and give not a single half hour in the twelvemonth to the work of Sabbath preparation, and bid a stern refusal to the every imploring call of the sick and the desolate and the dying, and bid a final adieu to the whole busi-

ness of family and household ministrations—and, after all, on the strength just of the performances that I have now specified, just of the duties and of no other that I have now touched upon, just of all that bustle and variety and exercise, both active and contemplative, for which the hospitals and other charities of the place throw open a most ample field to those who choose to embark upon it their time and their energies—I might in this way, I assert, sink all that originally belonged to the office of a minister of the gospel, and yet earn the character among you of being a most laborious, hard-wrought, painstaking, and in a great variety of ways most serviceable minister.

Now suffer me, my brethren, at this point in my narrative, most respectfully to charge you with a certain taste and tendency of your affections, which to me is a phenomenon of human character that is inexplicable. What I mean is the strong and insatiable relish which many of you feel, whether upon the occasions of public business, or of social intercourse, for the personal exhibition of your clergyman. Now, to minister gratification to this said relish, it is not necessary that he should help forward the business a single inch by his counsel or his experience. The whole management could go on throughout all its stages as well without him; and on what principle it is that his mere bodily presence should add a single whit either to the beauty or the completeness of the operation, is altogether beyond any talent of comprehension that I am possessed of. But whether I understand it or not, the peculiarity to which I am adverting, has, you must permit me to say, an undoubted existence among you; and to humor it, all that is necessary is just for the minister to lend out his person to the demands which are thus made on it—and though silent all the while as a statue, a mighty, and what appears to me is a mysterious object, appears to be fulfilled just by his being there; and when to satisfy my unquelled curiosity as to the cause, I have ventured to put a question upon the subject, I never yet got any further within the limits of an adequate answer, than merely—that they liked to see him;

and thus with no other purpose than that of solacing an appetite, for which I am sorry I can get no better designation than a doting and superstitious fondness, the most deep and serious invasions are practiced every day on the great province of the Christian ministry. And every spiritual workman in our establishment is surrounded by requisitions with which, if he were to comply to the amount of a very small fraction indeed, he would be kept in a state of perpetual belaborment; and it is not so much this unwarrantable craving after the man's bodily appearance that I complain of, for I most cheerfully admit, that there may be much of the milk of human kindness in it; and if the cordialities of human feeling have any play at all within his bosom, it is quite impossible to look at such an ingredient as this with an aspect of severity. But the thing, my dear brethren, which grieves me is, that there should be among you such a low estimate of the value of ministerial time, and of the substantial importance of strictly ministerial exercises—that because you do not see him at his professional work, the work should be counted so light and easy that it may be wantonly and at all times broken in upon—that because he is not compassed about with the insignia of visible employment, he may therefore be presumed to have little or no employment at all; and all this has helped, it has most powerfully and materially helped, to turn the stream of the demand for public agency away from the haunts of ordinary merchandise, and to bring it in an overwhelming tide of inundation on the houses of your clergymen—and it has well-nigh swept before it all that is primitive and peculiar in the duties of clergymen. It has helped—it has most mischievously helped, to efface the sacredness of our office, and to transform him who fills it into a man of mere secularities. It has helped—it has most woefully helped, to put the religious character of our situation into the back ground of public contemplation altogether, and to substitute in its place the labor of such services as others should have rendered—the weight of such manifold and oppressive drudgeries as others should have borne.

But to go on with my narrative. I have already said much of the interruption and the labor which the public charities of the place bring along with them; and yet I have not told you one half the amount of it. I have only insisted on that part of it which takes a minister from his house, and from which the minister, at the expense of a little odium, can at all times protect himself, by the determined habit of sitting immovable under every call and every application. All that arrangement which takes a minister away from his house may be evaded—but how shall he be able to extricate himself from the besetting inconveniences of such an arrangement as gives to the whole population of a neighborhood a constant and ever-moving tendency toward the house of the minister? The patronage with which I think it is his heavy misfortune to be encumbered, gives him a share in the disposal of innumerable vacancies, and each vacancy gives rise to innumerable candidates, and each candidate is sure to strengthen his chance of success by stirring up a whole round of acquaintances, who, in the various forms of written and of personal entreaty, discharge their wishes on the minister in the shape of innumerable applications. It is fair to observe, however, that the turmoil of all this electioneering has its times and its seasons. It does not keep by one in the form of a steady monsoon. It comes upon him more in the resemblance of a hurricane; and like the hurricanes of the atmosphere, it has its months of violence and its intervals of periodical cessation. I shall only say, that when it does come, the power of contemplation takes to herself wings and flees away. She cannot live and flourish in the whirlwind of all that noise and confusion by which her retreat is so boisterously agitated. She sickens and grows pale at every quivering of the household bell, and at every volley from the household door, by which the loud notes of impatience march along all the passages, and force an impetuous announcement into every chamber of the dwelling-place. She finds all this to be too much for her. These rude and incessant visitations fatigue and exhaust her, and at length

banish her entirely; nor will she suffer either force or flattery to detain her in a mansion invaded by the din of such turbulent and uncongenial elements.

But though I talk of cessations and intervals, you are not to suppose that there are ever at any time the intervals of absolute repose. There is a daily visitation, though it is only at particular months that it comes upon you with all the vehemence and force of a tornado. There was of late an unceasing stream of people passing every day through the house, and coming under the review of the minister on their road to the supplies of ordinary pauperism. This formed part of the prescribed conveyance through which each of them trust to find their way to the relief that they aspired after. This always secured a levee of petitioners, and kept up a perennial flow of applications, varying in rapidity and fullness with the difficulty of the times —but never, in the whole course of my experience, subsiding into a rill so gentle that it only ministered delight and refreshment to the bosom by the peacefulness of its murmurs. Oh, no! my brethren—there is a something here about which our tearful sons and daughters of poesy are most miserably in the wrong. I know that they have got many fine things to say about the minister of a beneficent religion having a ready tear for every suffering, and an open ear for every cry, and room in his house for every complainer, and room in his heart for a distinct exercise of compassion on the needs and the distresses of every afflicted family, and an open door through which the representations of dejected humanity may ever find a welcome admittance, and a free unoccupied day throughout every hour of which it is his part to act the willing friend of his parishioners, and to yield the alacrity of his immediate attentions in behalf of all the wants and all the wretchedness that is among them. Yes! all this ought to be done, and agents should be found for the doing of it. But the minister is not the man who can do it. The minister is not the man who should do it. And beset as we are on the one hand by a hard and a secular generation, who, without one sigh of

remorse could see every minister of the city sinking the spiritualities of his office under the weight of engagements which they themselves will not touch with one of their fingers: and deafened as we are on the other hand by the outcry of puling sentimentalists, who, without thought and without calculation, would realize all the folly and all the fondness of their fancy sketches upon us, I utterly refuse the propriety of all these services—and yet proclaiming myself the firm, the ardent, the devoted friend of the poor, do I assert these advocates of theirs to be the blind supporters of a system which has aggravated both the moral and the physical wretchedness of a most cruelly neglected population.

But I must bring my narrative to a close. There are many other miscellaneous items of employment which I have neither time nor recollection for enumerating. Many of the admittances into the charity schools of the place are granted upon the recommendation of a minister. Many statements about the circumstances of people, as if he were at all a fit hand for an office so invidious and so indelicate, will only be received on the attestation of a minister. The petitions for exemption from taxes must be signed by a minister. The petitions for exemption from road-money must be signed by a minister. The former of these two last is an imposition laid on us by Government—the latter is a county or a municipal imposition. But, indeed, it is not of much consequence to advert to this distinction. Our state and our provincial and our city rulers are all equally defaulters in this respect—that they have all a most invincible appetite for the aid and information of the minister—that from every quarter, whether of civil or of political regulation, there is a constant tendency to draw upon the time and the services of the minister—that this is fast ripening into all the stability of a familiar and a customary practice—that every year is separating the clergy of our Established Church by a wider interval from all the proper and peculiar duties of their employment—and that up from the high court of Parliament down to the humblest corporations

of the land, there is a general and an alarming process now in full operation to transform and to secularize, and I add, most woefully to degrade us.

I will not speak at length just now about the mischievous effect of all this on the great mass of our population. We hold out in their eyes a totally different aspect from the ministers of a former age. We are getting every year more assimilated in look and in complexion to your surveyors, and your city clerks, and your justices, and your distributors of stamps, and all those men of place who have to do with the people in the matters of civil or of municipal agency. Every feature in the sacredness of our character is wearing down amid all the stir and hurry and hard-driving of this manifold officiality. And thus it is that our parishioners have lost sight of us altogether as their spiritual directors, and seldom or never come to us upon any spiritual errand at all—but taking us as they are led to do by the vicious system that is now in progressive operation—taking us as they are led by that system to find us, they are ever and anon overwhelming us with consultations about their temporalities—and the whole flavor of the spiritual relation between a pastor and his flock is dissipated and done away. There is none of the unction of Christianity at all in the intercourse we hold with them; and everything that relates to the soul and to the interests of eternity, and to the religious cure of themselves and of their families, is elbowed away by the work of filling up their schedules, and advising them about their moneys, and shuffling along with them amongst the forms and the papers of a most intricate correspondence. Time, and the concerns and the managements of time, have left no room for other conversation; and our poor perishing and misled people almost never think of bending their footsteps towards us on any other object than that of mere business. But upon this object they do crowd around us at a rate that is incalculable; and after having enumerated the specific purposes, for which in compliance with our Government and city regulations they are led to transact with their minister, you are now

prepared to understand how the general effect of the whole system is to make them look up to their minister as a man of great wisdom and information about all the secularities they have to do with, and that he is competent to furnish them with the best advice under every imaginable difficulty —and that surely they cannot trust so firmly to any quarter as to the ready friendship and the well-exercised discernment of their minister. And thus it is that the habit is now formed of repairing to him with the strangest variety of topics, on which he is expected to deliberate and to counsel them; and this ultimate effect of the system I have now been attempting to expose, forms a heavy addition to all those distractions which harrow up the mind, to all those annoyances which surround the person, to all those merciless intrusions which profane the every retirement, and reduce to a thing of shreds and patches the every intellectual process of your ministers.

SERMON XXIV.

[Preached at Glasgow in September, 1816.]

MATTHEW V. 38–48.

"Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: but I say unto you, That ye resist not evil; but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. Give to him that asketh thee; and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away. Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if you love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so? Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."

There is something in all these precepts that is apt to startle and to perplex us. The selfishness of man, which naturally is by far the most sensitive part of his constitution, takes immediate alarm at them, and would recoil from a morality in the observance of which it conceives that all the securities of justice behoved to be broken up, and that the interest of every scrupulous Christian would be thrown open and defenseless against the inroad of a thousand possibilities. If I am fanatic enough to give to every one who chooseth to ask of me, I shall soon become as helpless and as indigent as any of them. If in this age of splendid enterprises I accede to the demand of every borrower, when —fully bent on the airy magnificence of their own speculations—so many are to be found who without one sigh of remorse will put the property of others to the most hazardous exposures—why, at this rate I shall soon exchange that tranquillity which arises from the consciousness of all that belongs to me being in safe keeping, for a state of fearful brooding, anxious insecurity. If I resist not the unfair en-

croachments of a neighbor, but rather than go to law make a surrender to him of the full, and more than the full, of his iniquitous demand, I shall soon become a prey to the rapacity and the fraudulence of all who are around me. If I make no head against the urgency of others plying their own selfish exactions on my time and my conveniency, I shall soon meet with a number of people who will triumph over the facility of my compliances, and would reduce me to a state of humble and truckling subserviency on all the wanton variety of their inclinations. If I resent not the indignity of a blow, I shall throw myself open to every degradation of insult and of violence. And lastly, if I shall accomplish so romantic and so seemingly impracticable a thing as to love my enemies, I invite their hostility—I set up in my own person a mark for all the attempts of malignity and injustice—I bid the worst and the basest of men trample with impunity upon me. Nor do I conceive how, were I to pitch my aim from this moment at a morality so remote from all that the eye witnesses of human life and human performance, I could be upheld for a single month in any of the comforts or any of the securities of my earthly existence.

In this way do you not perceive how the mind of him who summons up all these anticipations, and dwells upon them with such feelings of disquietude and alarm, may in fact be thrown into an open and determined revolt against the authority of these requirements altogether? Do you not conceive how his anger, and his urgent sense of interest, and his impatience under the provocation of injustice, and his dread lest the forbearance laid upon him in this passage should invite the repetition of it—do you not conceive how all this might raise up the feelings and resentments and purposes of the inner man to an actual warfare against the Lawgiver of the New Testament? Oh! my brethren, are there none here present who, with the luster of many graceful accomplishments upon them, utterly refuse all homage to the pacific and the yielding virtues which are here recommended? We do not question their integrity—we grant it of them that they have passed through

the manifold transactions of business without the flaw of a single impeachment upon their reputation—we know how proudly they would disdain the temptation which offered to draw them aside from the onward line of truth and of rectitude. But with all this stirring sense of honor which they carry in their bosoms, are there none who carry the stirrings of a proud and vindictive jealousy along with it? We allow that in the heart of many an acquaintance there is a high-minded principle, in virtue of which he moves through society without the taint upon his character of any one suspicious imputation. But surely, if it be through the working of the same high-minded principle that he disdains an affront, and has no sufferance for an injury, and gives impetuous way to all the movements of a quick and restive indignation, do you not see how possible it is that a quality or a temper of the soul may both bear the name and receive the homage of a virtue in the exercise of which God is dethroned from the sovereignty which belongs to Him; and have we not here an example of that thing which is highly esteemed among men being in God's sight an abomination?

But the heart of man must find some other plea to satisfy it than its own willfulness, and amid all his resentful feelings and all his selfish alarms is he ever seeking to put on the semblance of principle—and in the very case that we are now putting does he affect an apprehension for the interests of virtue—and he will link his own cause with the cause of society at large—and he will tell us that the unreserved habit of giving which the Gospel recommends would unhinge the whole system and order of the community; that were Christians to bring these various precepts to a literal and unreserved fulfillment, all industry would be suspended, and all justice be trampled under foot, and an unprincipled violence would walk at large over the face of the country; and that under this extravagant doctrine of non-resistance all the mounds of public and personal security would be swept away, and that the painful spectacle would ever be offering itself of sordid and unrelenting men carrying it with a triumphant impunity over the weak but conscientious

disciples of a religion which taught them to bend submissively to every imposition, and to yield an unquestioning compliance with every requirement.

In this way you can conceive how selfishness may borrow to herself something like the color of virtue—and in her active resistance to the virtues of the text, she may have something at least like the semblance of public consideration to rest upon, and to save the appearance of consistency with this express passage of revelation, she will turn that branch of Christian morality of which it treats into a question of degrees—and sitting in judgment on this question, she will ask in how far we are to understand that a literal obedience should be yielded, or at what precise point in the scale of hardship and privation it is right for a disciple of the New Testament to make his stand? And is there no hazard, think you, in these circumstances, that a man will carry his patience and his meekness and his long-suffering just as far, and no farther, than suits the willfulness of his own inclination, and that full license will be given to the spontaneous movements of anger and jealousy —and that by the weight of this combined sophistry, into which the will and the reason have thrown their respective elements, the bidden duties of the text will be completely overborne—and that thus, after all, the counsel of the man's own heart and the sight of his own eyes, will carry it over the will of God, so as that the authority of these His precepts shall be set aside altogether, and we His subjects occupied with the exceptions that we have mustered up against the rule which He has delivered to us, shall lose sight of the rule itself as the matter of our most strenuous and diligent and pointed observations.

Now, I count it a high point of Christian discipleship that when we sit down to the book of God's revelation, we should do it with the sense upon our hearts that we are in a state of entire pupilage—that every commandment which issues from this book should carry the influence of its own direct and obvious authority along with it—that for us to summon up in opposition to these commandments either the alarms

of selfishness, or any general speculations of ours about the machinery of public and political interest, is to eye this book with the authority of judges, rather than to drink in its lessons with the spirit and the acquiescence of little children—that at this rate, every obligation of the New Testament morality may be paralyzed, and every requirement be dethroned from the sovereignty which belongs to it, and we, instead of acting our bidden part in that great system which it is for God alone to survey in all the variety of its bearings, and to adjust throughout all the intricacy of its movements, may be offering to thwart the divine will by some paltry interest of our own, or by some no less paltry but presumptuous theory to embarrass these beneficent plans of administration which the divine wisdom has conceived, and which the divine power will carry into sure effect by the instrumentality, not of man's skillful corrections, but of man's humble and unresisting obedience.

The wisdom of man may throw a mistiness around the declarations of the will and the counsel of God; but surely if all the attempts of human wisdom to restrain or to qualify be warded away from the passage now before us, there cannot be devised a statement of meaning more perspicuous or more fitted to find a direct and lucid conveyance into the plainest understanding. Just conceive a man resolved to bind himself hand and foot to the authority of God, and that he shall neither flinch from any one bidding, however it may cross and gall his inclination, nor suffer himself to be bewildered away by any sophistry whatever from the obvious signification of the verses which have now been submitted to you—and is it possible for him to miss the sense of precepts so clearly and prosaically laid down, as —Resist not evil, and Give to him that asketh thee, and Love thine enemies, and Do good to them that hate you, and Pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you?

The principle of being resolved at all hazards to follow the will of God, is the main and the essential element of sanctification. A man possessed of this principle will fear-

lessly embark himself on the line of entire and universal obedience. He will look upon this as his alone business, and will prosecute no by-end whatever that can at all distract him from this only path to a blissful eternity. I know that at the outset of this path his brooding fancy may aggravate the many hardships he will have to encounter—ay, and if he has not wound up his resolves to that great and initiatory principle in the life of a Christian, of forsaking all, and being willing to surrender all at the requirement of the one Master he has chosen, he will either shrink from Christianity altogether, or take up with a diluted and a compromised Christianity, in the service of which he will never earn the reward of him who cleaves with full purpose of heart unto his God. Be assured, my brethren, that there is a corroding worm throughout the whole system of your religious concerns, if there be not a singleness of aim and a singleness of desire, and an unbroken principle on your part implicitly to follow wherever the word of God shall lead the way; and if you offer to except or to modify any obvious precept of His, whether it be on the impulse of an alarmed selfishness, or on some presumptuous speculation of your own about the general interest of a world which it is for Him alone to manage and superintend—you just make a rebellious deviation from the course that He has prescribed to you, and you insert such a flaw into your own personal Christianity as violates the simplicity, and must eventually mar the success of the whole enterprise.

But if the alarm be extravagant, and beyond the truth of the case, would it not be well to reduce and to quiet it? Surely, in the work of counting the cost of the tower before you sit down to build it, if it be wrong to make a flattering estimate, it is also wrong to make an exaggerated one of the whole expense and difficulty of the undertaking. It is true that whatever the expense be, you should have an honest and entire readiness both to do and to suffer all things which you think, upon your clear understanding of the will of God, ought to be done and ought to be suffered. But fancy, as I said before, may magnify the suffering;

and is it not right to reduce the exaggerations of fancy—when she conjures up ideal pictures, and makes them float before the eye of the mind in such a way as to terrify and disturb it? Fancy is ever looking on to the possibilities of future life—and as she employs herself in framing cases where disgrace and poverty would be the sure effect of a literal adherence to the commandments of God, she may cause the man on whom she works to falter from his purpose of observing them. In other words, she may beset the commencement of his path as a Christian with such temptations as he has not strength for; and is it not right to allay the force of these temptations? To enter this path with any drawback whatever on the purpose of doing simply and entirely what God bids you, is to enter upon it with such a double, such an ambiguous, such a broken and divided sentiment within you, as to make a wrong outset, and as will never land you in a prosperous termination. If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But this sad work of mustering up exceptions, and brooding over the fancied impossibilities of the bidden obedience, and grafting our own moderate and practicable system on the unbending requisitions of the great Lawgiver, and garbling the record of His counsel, and modifying the plain and undeniable sense of His communications, and compounding matters between His express authority and our clinging attachment to the ease and interest of the world—I say this work of secret hypocrisy, which carries in it a flinching of purpose from the will of God, under the prospect of some future and imagined possibility, is just as hostile to our state as Christians, as if the possibility were turned into a fact, and there were on our part a flinching of performance from the will of God. In the one case you have a palpable deficiency of obedience in the outer man—in the other case, a concealed reservation of purpose in the inner man, bespeaking such a radical unfairness of heart as is sure to bewilder all our perceptions of divine truth, to give an unhingement to all our principles, to darken our views as well as to vitiate and enfeeble our practice

to depose conscience from its supremacy, to unsettle our faith in that testimony which we are doing the uttermost to resist and to mutilate—and, in one word, by provoking the Spirit of God to put all His counsels and all His illuminations away from us.

This propensity of the mind to run on to the conceivable cases of future history, and to dwell on the circumstances in which an entire and literal obedience would be so painful and so inconvenient, and so hard in its consequences, acts certainly as a temptation, disposing us to set aside the authority of the commandment. Now, it is observable, that our Saviour, even at the very outset of His addresses to those whom He called upon, said something to alleviate the force of this temptation. He occasionally said what had the effect of mitigating their apprehensions of all they had to lose and of all they had to suffer in the business of following after Him. He did not call His disciples to take His yoke upon them without telling them at the same time that His yoke was easy and His burden was light. He did not tell them to seek first the kingdom of God and its righteousness, without telling at the same time that all other things should be added unto them. He did not tell them that no man could be His disciple who did not forsake all, without also telling them that every man who forsook all should receive an hundred fold, even in this life, for what he had relinquished. Christians must be in readiness to give up all for eternity; but it is to be remarked that the apostles did not tell this to their disciples without also telling them that, in point of fact, they should meet with an abundance of temporal enjoyments scattered along the road that leads to eternity. Paul tells his Christian friends by his example that they should count not their life dear unto them—but he also tells them that godliness has the promise of the life that now is, as well as of that which is to come; and while all of them are made to know that the commandments of God lie most indispensably upon them, they are also made to know that these commandments are not grievous.

In pursuance of this method, let me not attempt any deduction from the authority of any obvious commandment; let me not paralyze unto the death any one of the precepts before us, all of which have a living power of obligation; let me not dilute into utter insignificancy all that is here said about the duties of liberality and forbearance and resistance, and the love we should bear to the injurious and to enemies; but let me conceive an honest disciple to act upon the sense and the unadulterated impression of this passage, and gathering our anticipations of his future history from the Bible of God and the observations of man, we are convinced that in the actual exercise of the virtues here recommended, he will find how much the terrors of an alarmed imagination outstrip the realities of living experience.

You will therefore indulge me in this way of it. Instead of entering directly into the business of explaining, or of enforcing these precepts, I meet at the very outset of my attention to them with a kind of repulsive suspicion stirring in my own heart, and distinctly observable in the fears and countenance of others, about the extent of their obligation, and the practicability of their following. I make it my first and my foremost object to beat down this suspicion, to grapple with the difficulty which flashes upon me at the very first footstep of my being introduced into this field of contemplation, and, if possible, to get it disposed of—to do what I have already told you was done by Christ and His apostles—to alleviate the force of the temptation which meets you, not at the time when you are doing the requirements of this passage, not at the time when you are rendering to them the obedience of your actual performances, but at the time when you should be rendering to them the obedience of your honest and unreserved purposes—to clear away the obstacle which lies on the road to that singleness of aim and that full determination of loyalty to the God of heaven, without which the inner man is virtually and substantially in an attitude of rebellion. This I conceive to be a right and a useful preparation for the subse

quent train of my argument, and I trust you will find that when laboring, even on this preparatory ground, a something might be met with to throw light on the passage, and help to enforce and to illustrate the duties which are here laid down to us.

In pursuance of this, let me take up one of the exactions which are before us, even the one by which we are required when smitten on the one cheek to turn the other also. The barrier which I am attempting to remove, and which lies in the way of an entire purpose to give to this precept an entire obedience, is the fearful suspicion, that if I resent not the indignity of the blow I shall throw myself open to every degradation of insult and of violence. Now, if I can remove this barrier, I shall clear away from the commencement of the path of practical obedience a temptation which, if yielded to, will vitiate that commencement. I shall remove a temptation in virtue of which a man's initiatory attitude may become a wrong one. I shall remove a temptation which, by poisoning and diluting the purposes of the mind, will infallibly impair even the visible aspect of the man's obedience, and take away from the entireness of his outward performances. I am not at present standing on the high ground, that even though every species of degradation and violence should be the result of an unexcepted adherence to the will of God, they form but a small surrender when put by the side of a reversion so splendid as an eternity of secure and peaceful enjoyment. I am not admitting the justness of this fearful anticipation, and then closing with you on the principle, that though it were realized, that would merely be laying upon you the light affliction which is but for a moment, and is as nothing to the exceeding and eternal weight of glory. This is firm and solid ground at all times to stand upon; but in the present instance it is not necessary to repair to it. Instead of meeting the fearful anticipation in this way, I altogether refuse the justness of it. I deny the fact that degradation and violence will ensue to any Christian from his passive reception of a blow, submitted to under the force of a re-

ligious principle, and borne with an uncomplaining meekness of temper, and at the same time with that elevated sense of duty which spreads an aspect of sacredness over the whole of his observable history. If you are kept from the full purpose of submitting yourself to the precept in question by an apprehension of the indignities which the fulfillment of it might heap upon you, then I might say that, however well founded the apprehension should be, it is not enough to dissipate the obligation of a mandate issued from the legislature of heaven in terms of such round and unqualified deliverance as are employed in the text. This is what I might say; but I am enabled to say more—that the temptation is a mere fictitious image conjured up by the fancy of man, ever breeding some extravagance or other to agitate and disturb him. Or go to the essential fountain of the matter—that is, to the fabrication of him in whom the power of misleading and deluding the children of Adam is vested for a season, even the father of lies, whose delight it is to lay some specious imposition or other before the eye of the mind, for the purpose of breaking in upon the universality of its purposes, and painfully disturbing its aspirations, in its initiatory endeavors after a pure and holy and complete and withal an unexcepted obedience. Now, my brethren, do you come forward and ask me what it is that entitles me to meet the apprehension in question by such a direct and immediate denial? I again repeat my contradiction to it, and I avow that I have at this moment as many arguments upon which to rest the evidence of this contradiction as there are human hearts and human countenances before me. I am supposing an humble and devoted follower of the Lord Jesus, with all the due meekness of the Christian temper, and all the lofty determination of Christian principle, passively to take the blow that has been inflicted on him; and the question I have to put is—where shall we find a man who, under such impressive circumstances as these, will be monster enough to repeat that blow? Sure I am, that throughout the whole extent of the random and indiscriminate multitude before

me, there is not a single individual can be fixed upon who could thus brutally wanton it over the meek and unresisting attitude of the saint who stood before him. Oh, no! my brethren, there is not one of you who, under the power of that moral recoil which would come upon your heart, and bear down all the vindictive purposes that stirred in it—there is not one of you who would not feel as irresistibly held back from the act of repetition as if the lifted arm were arrested in its midway course by a stroke of palsy, or the God of heaven, interposing at the critical moment in behalf of His faithful servant, had, by a single miracle, willed all its energies away from it. Could a single man be fixed upon who understood not what this recoil was, and had the atrocity of character to inflict the second blow on the cheek that was turned to receive it, the cry of execration from all his fellows would come upon him in one tide of overwhelming chastisement, and turning him into a victim of public wrath, would hunt him away beyond the outskirts of society. Now, what is this to say but that the suspicion in question is a bugbear? It has done a world of mischief by seducing many an inquirer from the singleness of a resolved loyalty to the God of heaven, and after all it gives evidence to the author from whom it comes by turning out to be a falsehood. It is hard, indeed, that that apprehension should corrupt the initiatory attitude of the soul, and should make it hesitate about the extent of that obedience that it is to render to the authority of Christ, and should detract from the entireness of its resolution to follow Him fully, and to cleave to Him with full purpose of heart; and it crowns the hardship of the whole circumstance when the thing apprehended is, after all, nothing better than a phantom flitting before the eye of a misled imagination. The thing apprehended, my brethren, will not happen. God has provided against it in the moral constitution of the species. He who wields an omnipotent sway over the movements of the spirit as well as over all the elements of the material creation, can turn the heart of every man whithersoever He will, and bind its every

impulse towards the accomplishment of His promises in behalf of the meek and the righteous and the godly. Out of the materials of human character as it exists in society —deeply tainted and vitiated as it is by that sad hereditary disease which our first parents have entailed upon us— even out of these materials can God create a shield of protection for His servants which shall compass them about, and spread over them such a mantle of security as will leave them safe to go throughout all the departments of business and of intercourse, and to carry a most literal, a most scrupulous, a most exact obedience to all His requirements along with them. Your own experience demonstrates the truth of this in as far as the particular requirement I am now insisting on is concerned. The man who fearlessly commits himself to the performance of this requirement, up to the last jot and tittle of it, foolishly scrupulous as he may be thought, and fanatic as he may be called, will compel the homage of all his acquaintances, and no hand will ever rise in violence against him, and he will move his protected way throughout all the heats of human assailment; and instead of that indignity with which the false tempter tried to scare him away from the doing of the commandments, he will find that the faithful God has overshadowed him with a canopy of defense, and placed the homage of tenderness, and the salutations of respect, and the soothing civilities of friendship and cordial admiration on every side of him. Speaking on the mere probabilities of human experience, I assert it of this man that he stands greatly less exposed to the outbreaks of rudeness or of violence than he who has cast off the spirit and the authority of this passage altogether, and who is jealous of his honor, and proudly disdainful of every encroachment upon his rights, and stands on the ready tiptoe of vindication for every one affront, real or imaginary. The passive, unresisting Christian may, according to the alarms of nature, be looked upon as exposed to every blast of human violence—but let him endure to the end, and let faith banish these alarms, and let him keep an unsullied and unmu-

tilated integrity of obedience, and let him embark on the field of duty with the single principle of acting up to all the requirements, and he will find how the field brightens and beautifies before him by every footstep of his advancement. He will find that in the keeping of the commandments there is great reward. He will find the groundlessness of those many apprehensions by which the great enemy of mankind tried to deter him from the service of heaven's Master, and an obedience to heaven's Lord. And for the future exposure to malignity and rudeness by which he tried to scare him away from the path that leads to eternity, he will find that even in time the kindliness of every eye will be drawn towards him, and all hostility and violence, as if arrested by the omnipotence of a charm, will be cleared away from his footsteps.

Before I conclude, I can not but point your attention to the beautiful harmony that subsists between all this experience and the promises of Scripture. The meek, one would think, are ready to be overborne by surrounding violence, and yet God says the meek shall inherit the earth. The man who fears God, and reads this passage of His communication, will love his enemies; and God says—I will make the enemies of him who fears me to be at peace with him. Oh! pause, pause, my brethren, ere you suffer any apprehension whatever to mutilate the entireness of that prescriptive code which the Author and Finisher of our faith has bequeathed to us; and when I think of duties being ours and events being God's—when I think of His absolute control over the events of human society, and how He can turn the heart of man whithersoever He will—when I think of the way in which He has shielded the human species from the violence of the inferior creation, even by putting the fear of man and the dread of man upon all animals—when I think of the way in which He has shielded the passive recipients of a blow from the violence of their own species, by all those checks of delicacy and feeling which He hath laid on the whole mass of human society—when I further think of the harmony between this

portion of human experience and the promises of the Bible, and I take a survey of the extent of these promises, I must protest against admitting the fear of any consequences whatever from trenching on the entireness of our purpose to yield an undeviating adherence to the precepts of the Bible; but knowing that all these consequences are in His hand and under His absolute direction, let us prove how fearlessly we confide in the providence and faithfulness of God by the evidences of a close, an assiduous, and an unexcepted observation carried round the whole compass and extent of the revealed law of God.

SERMON XXV.

[Preached at Glasgow in February, 1817.]

ACTS XIX. 24, 25.

"For a certain man, named Demetrius, a silversmith, which made silver shrines for Diana, brought no small gain unto the craftsmen; whom he called together with the workmen of like occupation, and said, Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth."

There are two ways in which a certain air of secularity and of week-day earthliness might be imparted to a pulpit demonstration. It might be done by a preacher who pitches no higher than a worldly system of morals—who founds it on the inferior principles of interest and a reputation among men—who banishes away from it all that is heavenly and all that is peculiar in the spirit of the gospel—and who, while he pursues the details of civil, and social, and domestic economy, seems animated by nothing else than that bare consideration of propriety which it is competent for any man to entertain, though he neither look upward to God nor onward to the judgment that is in reserve for him. Let it never be forgotten, that even in that heart where the spiritualities of faith have no occupation—that even in the bosom of him who never heeds his God, or casts one earnest regard towards the book of that message which reports to us His doctrine and His will, there may be a strong sense of moral rectitude, and a strong susceptibility to many of the finest touches of moral delicacy, and a ready movement of consent and of obedience to the impulses of honor and compassion and generosity, and all that is laudable or engaging in such a character may be either exemplified in the life, or urged, and urged most eloquently from the pulpit; and yet, neither in the one nor in the other may there be a single thought

beyond the world, or a single virtue which shall not find in the world all its acknowledgment and all its reward.

But again, there may to the eye and the apprehension of some be the very same air of secularity in the lucubrations of him who wants to preach the whole system of human life with the entire spirit of the New Testament—of him who is for carrying forward its strictest and its loftiest requisitions into all the manifold varieties of human experience—of him who would like to exalt the character of the species from their affection for the things which are below to a supreme and predominant affection for the things which are above—of him who would not be for letting down by a single step the spiritual character of Christianity, but would like to fix and to realize it on all the concerns of life and on all the actual business of society. For, you will observe, that the lessons of theology may be dealt out to an audience in the terms of an abstract and lofty representation, and its well-built system of articles may be made to carry along with it the consent of every understanding, and its paramount authority over all the wishes of nature and of interest may be strenuously asserted on the one side, and be as unresistingly acquiesced in on the other, and all this without one stretch of application to the familiarities of the living and the acting man. And when this work of application is attempted—when the effort is made by the preacher to transplant this style of Christianity from speculation into practice—when, for this purpose, he follows your everyday path, and steps over the threshold of your family, and takes account of your doings in the market-place, and thrusts himself into the very heart of the secularities which engage you, and haunts the very footsteps you take from one transaction to another, and from one company to another, and keeps a wakeful eye on all the details of your ever-moving history, and, in a word, holds the faithful mirror to all that meets you, and takes you up from Sabbath to Sabbath, why, it may be felt by some that in the act of doing so the teacher of Christianity is inflicting upon it an offensive desecration—that he is spreading a hue of earthliness over

it—that he is debasing his subject by the vulgarities of tame and ordinary experience—that he is letting in upon a hallowed field such a plain familiarity of coloring as goes to mar and to violate the sanctity of its complexion, and making an invasion on the dignity of that pulpit which should be consecrated to the promulgation of religious truth in its most abstract, general, and elevated form.

Now, before I proceed to any further explanations, I must offer my protest against the whole drift and tendency of such an argument as the one I am now adverting to. I assert, with the most unqualified earnestness, that Christianity is the religion of life, and will bear to be carried in the whole extent of her spirit and of her laws throughout all the haunts and varieties of human intercourse—that her high pretension is to subordinate the every doing and the every interest of man to the regimen of her own unbending authority—that in her strictest and most essential character she may be introduced into the busiest walks of society, and there uphold her disciples in the exercise of that simplicity and godly sincerity which she lays upon them; and in opposition to all the alleged impracticabilities which are conceived to lie in the way of her full establishment over the acts and the consciences of our species, do I aver, that if she cannot be practical neither ought she to be preached—that if there be some invincible necessity why she should be banished from any one of your employments through the week, then she ought to be banished from every one of our pulpits upon the Sabbath—that she is either everything or nothing—that she knows of no compromise between her own laws and the maxims of the world by some expedient of time-accommodating conformity—that she disclaims all these midway adjustments entirely—and if she is deposed from her right of paramount control over all the conceivable cases of human conduct, then let her also be deposed from the ostensible place she now holds in the eye of the country—let her very name be given up to public scorn—let her forthwith be abandoned to the utter contempt and negligence of mankind.

Let me assure you that there is no safe alternative between an entire Christianity and no Christianity at all—that the religion of the New Testament admits of no partitioning whatever—that what it professes to do is either thoroughly to reform the world, or to bring the world under the burden of a righteous and unescapable condemnation—and that whoever the individual be who refuses to give up his conformities, and to drink in the pure and unqualified spirit of the gospel, and fearlessly to renounce all for eternity, and to give his honest and aspiring energies to the love of God and a patient waiting for Christ, let him plead obstacles and impossibilities as he may, he has chosen to abide with a world which the Bible represents to be lying in wickedness—he keeps him by the broad way which leadeth to destruction—he turns a deaf ear from the call to glory and to virtue—he winds not up his resolves to the pitch of a fair and honest consent to Christianity—he is not willing to forsake all in the act of following after Jesus, or to be entirely what He would have him to be, or to do entirely what He would have him to do.

I feel urged to these observations by the power and the prevalency of a sentiment which I know to exist among you—that the realities of actual experience offer an insurmountable barrier against the lessons of Christianity in all the fullness and variety of their application—that what may sound very well from the pulpit on the Sabbath is altogether inapplicable to the familiar and everyday practice of the week—that what the preacher can dress out to your delighted imaginations in the form of a very specious and imposing plausibility, must just be thrown aside and forgotten when you repair to the scenes of ordinary merchandise, and get involved in the common run of its calls and its temptations and its cares—that some mysterious necessity exists upon earth for binding down all who live in it to a certain degree of conformity—that it is utterly impossible, under the actual habits and arrangements of society, to sustain the lofty practice or the lofty tone of a morality that is bent on the themes, and the contemplations, and the

spiritual exercises of a celestial world:—in a word, that you are living in this world, and that, somehow or other, it is a world which raises an unconquerable obstruction to the purity and the elevation of the New Testament—and in this way has religion in the eyes of thousands got a visionary character impressed upon it. It is dethroned from the authority of a real and a living principle of conduct—it is reduced to an unsubstantial mockery, which may recur at intervals like a Sabbath charm upon the ear, without either entering the heart or vivifying the practice—and thus with many, and very many, who neither question its truth, nor resist its orthodoxy, nor trample upon its ordinances, nor vilify nor arraign its ministers as the useless advocates of an impracticable system, is it treated as a phantom of no power—a voice of no import and no significancy.

Now, how can you get at this very deep and general impression so as to reason it away, without descending upon that very field of experience on which it flourisheth? How can you accomplish the dislodgment of it, but by stepping abroad on that arena where its foundations are laid? How can you demolish this stronghold of resistance without taking an account of the pieces which compose it, and attending to the way in which they are framed together, so as to raise that fabric which it is our object to destroy? In other words, how can the argument we have stated be carried to its right conclusion without going into details? without touching upon the force of those temptations which are felt every day at your shops and in your counting-houses? without accompanying you into the varied haunts and operations of merchandise? and finally, without borrowing an aid from the light of such demonstrations as will both serve to establish a point in political economy, and show the applications to life and to business which may be drawn from the morality of the New Testament?

But this, as I have already intimated, may in the eyes of some throw a revolting air of secularity over the whole

speculation. It may be offensive to the unaccustomed ears of those who like to hear nothing but the transmuted orthodoxy of former days in its most general and unbending form, and are forgetful all the while of the minutely experimental applications, both to social and to domestic life, which characterized the teaching of the apostles. I should like you to give up this hereditary prejudice, and to get the better of a squeamishness that is so apt and so easy to be offended, and to remember that it likens you to those whom Paul called the weaker brethren, and to know that the best spirit of the gospel is when with the spirit of love there is mingled the spirit of power and of a sound mind. And therefore it is that I call upon you to bring the habit of a well-exercised discernment to this question, and to distinguish between the drift of an argument which goes to secularize what is Christian, and an argument which goes to Christianize what is secular—between an argument which brings down all that is heavenly to an earthly and a degraded standard, and an argument the honest aim of which is to bring up all that is earthly to a lofty and a celestial standard—to press home the gospel in all the extent of its requisitions, and thoroughly to infuse the whole system and business of human life with that very spirit which sustains tranquillity in the hour of death, and draws upon it the voice of approbation from the judgment-seat, and is at length admitted to flourish without impediment or alloy in the mansions of eternity.

In the instance before us, the attempt of Paul to introduce Christianity into the town of Ephesus was resisted—and that on the ground of its conceived hostility to the interests of a trade. It would have put an end to a particular manufacture. All the capital that was invested, and all the labor that was maintained in the business of making silver shrines for Diana, would have been thrown out of their wonted employment. This was the anticipated ruin which stood full in the eye of Demetrius and his brethren of like occupation—and with all the quick and sensitive jealousy of mercantile alarm did he stand up for the established

idolatry of the town, and try to bear down the enterprise of the apostles by the tumult and the terror of insurrectionary violence.

Now, I can not conceive how any under the impression of Christianity being the true religion, should wish well to such a resistance. Even let the whole mischief be realized up to the full extent of the felt anticipation, ought it not to have been willingly borne in the course of instituting a pure and authentic worship on the overthrow of Paganism and all its revolting abominations? It is a painful spectacle, no doubt, for the eye to dwell upon, when over the whole field of its contemplation it sees nothing but ruined capitalists and starving artificers; but to the mind of him who rightly balances the consideration of good and of evil, of duty and interest, of moral principle and temporal advantage, it will be the instantaneous judgment that the spectacle, melancholy as it is, ought to be endured, rather than that Christianity should be rejected—that everything must be given up for its sake—and that it must ever be regarded as the richest blessing which can be conferred upon a country, even though the way to the final establishment of this religion should be paved upon the ruins of its commercial greatness.

But the father of lies is ever employed in magnifying his temptations, and it were not out of place to consider in how far he overcharged that picture of wretchedness which floated before the eye of the Ephesian silversmith. It is very true, that from the moment when the great goddess Diana came to be universally despised, there would be a universal cessation of the demand for those silver shrines, the making of which brought no small gain unto the craftsmen. But in what way did it bring them the gain?—was it the mere working up of the article which brought to their door all the elements of comfort and subsistence for their families?—was there anything in the particular mode or exercise of industry which carried the power of wealth or of maintenance along with it?—would the mere employment of itself have fed or have clothed them? From what

source, I ask, did they draw the revenue which upheld them?—was it from the handiwork, or from the price paid for the handiwork?—was it from any active ability on the part of the manufacturer, or from an ability on the part of purchasers to afford them the price of the manufactured article? Why, my brethren, all that the manufacture could do was to produce its own commodity. The gain which accrued to the workmen was drawn from another quarter enurely. All the bread which it enabled them to purchase for their children, and all the substantial comfort with which it cheered the masters of so many a household establishment —and all the joyous spectacles which it reared of a whole street occupied by thriving and industrious families—every one of these elements lay comprised in one general object which embraced and provided for them all—not in the shrines, but in the price that was paid for them—not in the productive powers of the manufacturer, for from this source nothing could be made to emanate but shrines, but in the ability of those who purchased them—not in the handiwork, but in the effective demand of a previous and independent ability for the article that was wrought.

Now, mark it well, that though Paul had by the achievment of a single day christened the whole population of Ephesus, he would only have extinguished the taste for shrines, but he would not have reduced by a single iota the ability to purchase them. He would have put an end to the manufacture, we grant you, but there was nothing in his Christianity that could at all touch or impair the fund out of which flowed the gain and the maintenance of the people who were employed in it. The convert ceased his demand for shrines, but he did not on that account lose that portion of his revenue which went to defray the cost of them. This was still in reserve, and would in point of fact be discharged on other articles of expenditure. The ability of consumers to furnish a profit to the capitalist and a subsistence to the artificer, was just in every way the same after this revolution in the faith of the people as before it. One of the old channels through which it found

its way to the encouragement of industry was doubtless abandoned, but as soon as some substitute for shrines had been devised for taking off the unexpended increase, another channel would open, and we should behold as copious a distribution of all the elements of comfort as before, throughout as wide an extent of a working and a trading population.

That there would be all that temporary inconvenience and distress which arises from every sudden and unlooked-for shift in the state of the demand is undeniable. But it looked far more formidable in the eyes of Demetrius. Like many of the economists who have succeeded him, he saw in that measure, which would have done no more than change the direction of industry, a total and an irrecoverable extinction of it. What he honestly dreaded was a permanent blow to the trade of Ephesus—that she would, somehow, be shorn in part of her wealth and of her greatness—that a certain portion of manufacture, with all the benefit and subsistence it brought to families, would disappear from her. Nor did he see how soon her commerce would reascend to all its wonted prosperity—how it possessed an unquelled principle of vigor which made it to survive the shock of any sudden fluctuation—and that should every altar of Paganism be overthrown, and the gospel in all its pure and holy influences reign with unrivaled ascendency over the hearts of a Christian people, there would, after a moral revolution so big to him with the imagination of manifold disasters, be as plenteous a circulation of gain among the craftsmen, as busy and animated a throng in the market-place of his city, and a tide of exuberancy as full and as generous as ever, pouring forth from the various sources of nature and of Providence, throughout all her families.

And here do I make my confident appeal to the recollection of the very oldest of our citizens—to those of them who have taken the profoundest interest in the history of commerce, and have kept the most wakeful eye upon all its alternations—I bid them repeat, upon their own experi-

ence, how often in the course of their lives an oppressive weight of despondency has been seen to come upon our people, and some great political movement, or some interception in the paths of our foreign intercourse, has deranged the existing operations—and as they looked at the mischief which lowered so portentously upon them, what, I would ask, was the degree of fearful anticipation which it inspired? Was it only the distress of a few months of which they were afraid? or was it the visitation of some fixed and irrecoverable disaster? Did not the city feel herself menaced by an evil of far more terrible import than such a temporary embarrassment as every change in the direction of trade must necessarily create? Was it not a permanent decline of trade, or a partial extinction of it, which appalled her; and how often, I ask, has this periodic alarm arisen and spread its anxious and disheartening gloom over the spirits of a brooding population?

And, I ask again, how often has this apprehension turned out to be a chimera? How often has prosperity's brightening day emerged, and with more vivid luster than before, out of this little period of dark and troubled imaginations? How often has the city of our habitation broken her powerful and unfaltering way out of all the adversities which threatened to overwhelm her?—and tell me, ye sage and observant characters of half a century, as ye recount her seasons of dimness and distress, if e'er ye remember such a time when the boding cloud of mischief did not clear away, and the eye of a wakeful Providence did not again look out to shed its blessings and its smiles over as thriving and as populous a community as ever?

Such is the fact; and a very few repetitions of that one step in argument by which I attempted to meet the prophecy of Demetrius would complete the explanation. But this I forbear to prosecute, and think that I have gone far enough, in the place which I now occupy, when I have barely suggested it; and I shall only say, ere I proceed to the textual application of all this reasoning, that in every country where property is surrounded with the securities

of justice, the processes of trade can no more be permanently arrested than the processes of vegetation—that the stamina of its continuance and extension are in every way as indestructible as even the elements of nature—and that as surely as the seasons revolve, and the fruits of the earth ripen in their wonted exuberancy for the subsistence of man, so surely will commerce be upheld at an average standard of greatness under all her fluctuations—and let her languish in her threatening periods of transition as she may, she will ever be found to weather and survive the shock of all moral and all historical changes.

There is one respect in which we differ from the people of Ephesus. The question is not now between the interests of trade and the admittance of the Christian profession into our country; but there may at times be a question still between the interests of trade and the adoption of a Christian measure in our country—and the very argument of Demetrius, the silversmith, may be set up in factious opposition against the advocates of a righteous cause—and the advancement of a moral or of a religious good may thus be retarded on some plea of mercantile policy—and the best and purest devices of philanthropists may be withstood and frustrated, because they involve in them the overthrow of some existing craft which brings no small wealth unto the capitalists, and no small gain unto the craftsmen—and, as if the interest that was thus supported would not be replaced by another interest of equal extent, which would grow and form from the first moment of the measure being accomplished—would the measure be resisted with as much vehemence as if it involved the country in all the fatality of mischief, and the temporary evil arising from a mere change in the direction of trade would, if looked at through the mist of futurity, be magnified into the awful disaster of a permanent and ruinous invasion upon the trade itself—and thus might the defense of iniquities the most glaring and outrageous, be conducted in the very language and be falsely associated with the dearest objects of patriotism.

Let me relieve the generality of this argument by one illustration. Many of you remember the time when the natural enthusiasm of our country was kept at bay by the very argument of Demetrius—when the interest of trade was set up in resistance to all that justice could assert, or to all that compassion could plead, in behalf of outraged Africa—when it was said that the desolation of its families was essential to the maintenance of the families of Britain—when Parliament was overborne by pathetic representations from individuals who plead that their all would be dissipated, and from towns which maintained—and I believe honestly maintained—that their commerce would go into utter annihilation. It would have been our duty to have done what was righteous, even though all these anticipations had been realized. But look at the fact, and see what became of the bugbear when reduced to the dimensions of truth and of nature. Trace the history of that very town which sent forth the largest capital on these expeditions of barbarity. Tell me if she went into annihilation; or if in virtue of that vigorous principle of resurrection, in virtue of which commerce is ever found to break an unfettered way out of all its difficulties and alarms, she did not rise to a prouder elevation than in those days when she pursued her guilty career through the distress of unoffending habitations, and steeled her heart against the shriek of ravaged homes and desolated villages. No, my brethren! the argument was nothing against the urgency of so righteous a cause; but the argument was in itself a delusion, and should teach us how to distinguish between the inconveniencies of a change in the direction of trade, and the miseries of its final and irrecoverable extinction—and at all events never, never to give it the weight of one particle of *dust*, when set in array against either one demand of justice or one object of Christian policy.

I have hitherto confined myself to the most direct and obvious application of the text that has been submitted to you, and have scarcely broken ground on what I conceive to be by far the most useful and interesting of its applica-

tions. I have not had time to enter into any details of that way in which the fancied interests and necessities of trade are set up in opposition to the cause not of public but of personal Christianity. How out of its maxims and its usages there has arisen what I would call the wisdom of this world, which opposeth itself to the foolishness of preaching—how the principles of the gospel in all their extent and spirituality, are somehow or other conceived to be utterly inapplicable to the business of its week-day operations. And in this way has a strong practical barrier been raised against the admission of Christian truth in all its entireness, and against obedience to the lessons of Christian practice in all that power of universality which belongs to them. This my time at present will not permit me to enter upon, and therefore it is that I confine the argument of this day to one lesson which even still is capable of being turned to practical application. For, let it be observed, that Britain has not yet done with the magnificence of her moral career—that her watchful eye is still going to and fro upon the earth, and expatiates over the whole of its ample territory as a field for the plans and the adventures of benevolence—that under her auspices the gospel is breaking forth beyond the limits of Christendom —and whether we look to the accomplishment of her labors in distant lands, or to the efforts of her religious population after the establishment of perpetual and universal peace among the nations, we see an expansion in her designs which, if crowned with success, as they nobly were in the abolition of the slave trade of Africa, bids fair to spread the belief and the obedience of the gospel over the whole extent of our habitable world. The interest of trade has been set up against these great operations, and it were well the argument of the Ephesian silversmith could be appreciated in all the impotence which belongs to it.

But I hasten to a conclusion; and however dimly you may perceive the bearing of all I have alleged on the cause of Christ in the great matter of personal religion, I trust that the day is coming when an enlightened world shall

be brought to acknowledge how the authority of the gospel is paramount to all the imaginary interests of trade—how its pure and spiritual law should set aside all that is unchristian in its usages—how there is not one corruption of principle, or one relaxation from that simplicity and godly sincerity which it bears along with it, that the high and indispensable morality of the New Testament does not bid away,—that all its practical advantages might be realized, though its votaries were all thoroughly pervaded in all their desires and all their doings by the spirit of the gospel, —and that such a moral revolution, so far from arresting any one of the benefits of commerce, would give prosperity to all her movements, and make those comforts which follow in her train to flow as largely as ever over the nations and families of the world.

SERMON XXVI.

[The date of this sermon I have not been able to ascertain.]

I. CORINTHIANS I. 25.

"The foolishness of God is wiser than men."

If it be thought that this statement serves very much to reduce the importance of human learning, let it be observed, on the other hand, that still to human learning there belongs an important function in the matter of Christianity. One does not need to be the subject of a material impress upon his own person in order to judge of the accordancy between the device that is submitted to his notice and the seal that is said to have conveyed it. Both may be foreign to himself; and yet he, by looking to the one and to the other, can see whether they are accurate counterparts. And, in like manner, a man of sagacity and of natural acquirements may never have received upon his own heart that impression of the Bible which the Holy Ghost alone has strength to effectuate. But still, if such an impression be offered to his notice in the person of another, he may be able both to detect the spurious, and in some measure to recognize the genuine marks of correspondence between the contents of Scripture, on the one hand, and the creed or character of its professing disciple, on the other. It is well when such a man looks, in the first instance, to the written word; and by aid of the grammar and lexicon, and all the resources of philology, evinces the literal doctrine that is graven thereupon. It is also well when he looks, in the second instance, to the human subject, and by aid either of natural shrewdness or of a keen metaphysical inspection into the arcana of character, drags forth to light that moral and in-

tellectual picture which the doctrine of the Bible is said to have left upon the soul. If there be a single alleged convert upon earth who cannot stand such a trial when fairly conducted, he is a pretender, and wears only a counterfeit and not the genuine stamp of Christianity. And thus it is, that he who has no part whatever in the teaching that cometh from God—who is still a natural man, and has not received the things of the Spirit, may, to a certain extent, judge the pretensions of him who conceives that the Holy Ghost has taken of the things of Christ, and shown them to his soul. He can institute a sound process of comparison between the testimonies of Scripture, which a natural criticism has made palpable to him, and those traces of the soul which a natural sagacity of observation has also made palpable to him; and without himself sharing in an unction from the Holy Ghost, or being sealed by the Spirit of God unto a personal meetness for the inheritance of the saints, still may he both be able to rectify and restrain the escapes of fanaticism, and also to recall the departures that heresy is making from the law and from the testimony.

The work of Bishop Horsley against Unitarianism is a work which erudition and natural talent are quite competent to the production of. It is the fruit of a learned and laborious research into ecclesiastical antiquities, and a vigorous argumentatious application of the materials that he had gathered, to that controversy on the field of which he obtained so proud and pre-eminent a conquest. We would not even so much as hazard a conjecture on the personal Christianity of this able and highly gifted individual—we simply affirm, that for the execution of the important service which he at that time rendered to the cause, his own personal Christianity was not indispensable. And whether or not, by the means of a spiritual discernment, he was enabled to take off from the inscribed Christianity of the record an effectual impression of it upon his own soul, it was well that, by the natural expedients of profound sense and profound scholarship, he cleared away that cloud in which his antagonist, Dr. Priestly, might have shrouded the face of the

record both from the natural and spiritual discernment of other men. It is possible both to know what the doctrine of the Bible is, and most skillfully and irresistibly to argument it, without having caught the impress of the doctrine upon our own soul. It is possible for a man not to have come himself into effective personal contact with the seal of holy writ, and yet to demonstrate the character of the seal, and purge away its obscurities, and make it stand legibly out, which it must do ere it can stand impressively out to the view of others. There are many who look with an evil eye to the endowments of the English Church, and to the indolence of her dignitaries; but to that Church the theological literature of our nation stands indebted for her best acquisitions; and we hold it a refreshing spectacle, at any time that meager Socianism pours forth a new supply of flippancies and errors, when we behold, as we have often done, an armed champion come forth in full equipment from some high and lettered retreat of that noble hierarchy. Nor can we grudge her the wealth of all her endowments when we think how well, under her venerable auspices, the battles of orthodoxy have been fought, that in this holy warfare they are her sons and her soldiers who have been ever foremost in the field, ready at all times to face the threatening mischief, and by the might of their ponderous erudition to overbear it.

But if human talent be available to the purpose of demonstrating the character of the seal, it is also in so far available to the purpose of judging of the accuracy of the impression. The work, perhaps, which best exemplifies this, is that of President Edwards on the Conversions of New England, and in which he proposes to estimate their genuineness by comparing the marks that had been left on the person of the disciple with the marks that are inscribed on the book of the law and of the testimony. He was certainly much aided in his processes of discrimination upon this subject by the circumstance of being a genuine convert himself, and so of being furnished with materials for the judgment in his own heart, and that stood imme-

diately submitted to the eye of his own consciousness. But yet no one could, without the metaphysical faculty wherewith nature had endowed him, have conducted so subtle, and at the same time so sound and just an analysis as he has done; and no one without his power of insight among the mysteries of our nature—a power which belonged to his mind according to its original conformation—could have so separated the authentic operation of the word upon the character from the errors and the impulses of human fancy. It is true that none but a spiritual man could have taken so minute a survey of that impression which the Holy Ghost was affirmed to have made through the preaching of the word upon many in a season of general awakening; but few, also, are the spiritual men who could have taken so masterly a survey, and that just because they wanted the faculties which accomplish their possessor for a shrewd and metaphysical discernment among the penetralia of the human constitution. It is thus that by the light of nature one may trace the characters which stand out upon the seal—and by the light of nature one may be helped at least to trace the characters that are left upon the human subject in consequence of this supernal application. Fanaticism is kept in check by human reason, and the soberness of the faith is vindicated. The extravagancies of all pretenders to a spiritual revelation are detected and made manifest, and the true disciple stands the test he is submitted to, even at the bar of the natural understanding.

We cannot take leave of Edwards without testifying the whole extent of the reverence that we bear him. On the arena of metaphysics he stood the highest of all his contemporaries, and that too at a time when Hume was aiming his deadliest thrusts at the foundation of morality, and had thrown over the infidel cause the whole *éclat* of his reputation. The American divine affords perhaps the most wondrous example in modern times of one who stood richly gifted both in natural and in spiritual discernment; and we know not what most to admire in him—whether the deep philosophy that issued from his pen, or the humble and

child-like piety that issued from his pulpit—whether when as an author, he deals forth upon his readers the subtleties of a profound argument, or when as a Christian minister he deals forth upon his hearers the simplicities of the gospel—whether it is when we witness the impression that he made by his writings on the schools and high seats of literature, or the impression that he made by his unlabored addresses on the plain consciences of a plain congregation. In the former capacity he could estimate the genuineness of the Christianity that had before been fashioned on the person of a disciple—but it was in the latter capacity, and speaking of him as an instrument, that he fashioned it, as it were, with his own hands. In the former capacity he sat in judgment as a critic on the resemblance that there was between the seal of God's word and the impression that had been made on the fleshly tablet of a human heart. In the latter capacity he himself took up the seal and gave the impressing touch by which the heart is conformed unto the obedience of the faith. The former was a speculative capacity, under which he acted as a connoisseur who pronounced on the accordancy that obtained between the obedience of the Bible and the character that had been submitted to its influence. The latter was an executive capacity, under which he acted as a practitioner who brought about this accordancy, and so handled the doctrines of the Bible as to mold and to subordinate thereunto the character of the people with whom he had to deal. In the one he was an overseer who inspected and gave his deliverance on the quality of another's work, in the other he was the workman himself—and while as the philosopher he could discern, and discern truly, between the sterling and the counterfeit in Christianity, still it was as the humble and devoted pastor that Christianity was made, or Christianity was multiplied in his hands.

Now, conceive these two faculties which were exemplified in such rare and happy combination in the person of Edwards, to be separated the one from the other, and given respectively to two individuals. One of them would then

be so gifted as that he could apply the discriminating tests by which to judge of Christianity—and the other of them would be so gifted as that, instrumentally speaking, he could make Christians. One of them could do what Edwards did from the press—another of them could do what Edwards did from the pulpit. Without such judges and overseers as the former, the faith of the Christian world might be occasionally disfigured by the excesses of fanaticism; but without such agents as the latter, faith might cease to be found—and the abuses be got rid of only by getting rid of the whole stock upon which such abuses are occasionally grafted. It is here that Churches, under the domination of a worldly and unsanctified priesthood, are apt to go astray. They confide the cause wherewith they are intrusted to the merely intellectual class of laborers, and they have overlooked, or rather have violently and impetuously resisted the operative class of laborers. They conceive that all is to be done by regulation, and that nothing but what is mischievous is to be done by impulse. Their measures are generally all of a sedative, and few or none of them of a stimulating tendency. Their chief concern is to repress the pruriencies of religious zeal, and not to excite or foster the zeal itself. By this process they may deliver their Establishment of all extravagances, so as that we shall no longer behold within its limits any laughable or offensive caricature of Christianity; but who does not see that by this process they may also deliver the Establishment of Christianity altogether—and that all our exhibitions of genuine godliness may be made to disappear under the same withering influence which deadens the excrescences that occasionally spring from it. It is quite a possible thing for the same Church to have a proud complacency in the law, and argument, and professional science of certain of its ministers, and along with this to have a proud contempt for the pious earnestness and pious activity of certain other of its ministers—in other words, it may applaud the talent by which Christianity is estimated, but discourage the talent by which Christianity is made; and thus,

while it continues to be graced by the literature and accomplishments of its members, may it come to be reduced into a kind of barren and useless inefficiency as to the great practical purposes for which it was ordained.

To judge of an impression requires one species of talent —to make an impression requires another. They both may exist in very high perfection with the same individual, as in the case already quoted; but they may also exist apart, and often in particular may the latter of the two be found in great efficiency and vigor, when the criticism and the metaphysics necessary to complete the former of the two may be entirely wanting. The right policy of a Church is to encourage both these talents to the uttermost, and not to prevent the evils of a bad currency by laying such an arrest on the exercise of the latter talent as that we shall have no currency at all. It must be produced ere it can be assayed; and it is possible so to chill and to discourage the productive faculty in our Church as that its assaying faculty shall have no samples on which to sit in judgment. This will universally be the result in every Church where a high-toned contempt for what it holds to be fanaticism is the alone principle by which it is actuated, and where a freezing negative is ever sure to come forth on all those activities which serve to disturb the attitude of quiescence into which it has sunk and settled. The leading measures of such a Church are all founded on the imagination that the religious tendencies of our nature are so exuberant as that they need to be kept in check, instead of being in fact so dormant as that they need work, and watchfulness, and all that is strenuous and painstaking in the office of an evangelist, for the purpose of being kept alive. The true Christian policy of a Church is to avail itself of all the zeal and all the energy which are to be found both among its ecclesiastics and its laymen for the production of a positive effect among our population—and then, should folly or fanaticism come forward along with it, fearlessly to confide the chastening of all this exuberance to the sense and the scholarship, and the sound intellectual Christianity, for the diffusion of which

over the face of our Establishment the Establishment itself has made such ample provision. Such is our impression of nature's lethargy and deadness, that we are glad when anything comes forward, that we are pleased to behold any symptoms of spiritual life or vegetation at all; and so far from being alarmed by the rumors of a stir and a sensation and an enthusiasm in any quarter of the land, we are ready to hail it as we would the promise of some coming regeneration. A policy the direct opposite of this is often the reigning policy of a Church, and under its blasting operation spurious and genuine Christianity are alike obliterated. The work of pulling up the tares is carried on so furiously that the wheat is pulled up along with it; the vineyard is rifled of its goodliest blossoms, as well as of its noxious and pestilential weeds; and thus the upshot of the process of extirpating fanaticism may be to turn the fruitful field into a wilderness, and spread desolation over all its borders.

A Church so actuated does nothing but check the excrescences of spiritual growth, and may do it so effectually as to reduce to a naked trunk what else might have sent forth its clustering branches, and yielded in goodly abundance the fruits of piety and righteousness. There is no positive strength put forth by it on the side of vegetation, but all on the side of repressing its hated overgrowth. It makes use only of one instrument, and that is the pruning-hook, as if by its operation alone all the purposes of husbandry could be served. Its treatment of humanity proceeds on such an excessive fertility of religion in the human heart, that all the toil and strenuousness of ecclesiastics must be given to the object of keeping it down, and so confining it within the limits of moderatism, instead of such a natural barrenness, that this toil and this strenuousness should rather be given to the various and ever-plying activities of an evangelist who is instant in season and out of season. It is thus that the outfield of sectarianism may exhibit a totally different aspect from the inclosed and well-kept garden of an Establishment. In the former there may be a positive and desirable crop along with the weeds and rankness which

have been suffered to grow up unchastened. In the latter there may be nothing that offendeth, save the one deadly offense of a vineyard so cleansed and purified and thwarted in all its vegetative tendencies, as to offer from one end to the other of it one unvaried expanse of earthliness.

We therefore do wrong in laying such a weight of discouragement on the laborers who produce—and throwing the mantle of our protection and kindness only over the laborers who prune. And what, it may be asked, are the ingredients of mightiest effect in the character and talents of a productive laborer? They are not his scholarship, and not his critical sagacity of discernment into the obscurities of Scripture, and not his searching or satirical insight among the mysteries of the human constitution. With these he may be helped to estimate the Christianity that has been formed, and to lop off its unseemly excrescences, but with these alone he will never positively rear on the foundation of nature the edifice itself. This requires another set of qualifications, which may or may not exist along with that artificial learning to which we trust an adequate homage has been already rendered by us.

We have already done homage to the importance of human learning on this matter. It acts as a fly to regulate the operation, but it is not the power which gives impulse to the operation. For the putting forth of this power we must look to men who bear upon their own hearts the impress of Christianity, whether they are with or without a very high and artificial scholarship. We must look to those who have the Spirit themselves, and who have power in their intercessions with God, and prevail so as to obtain the Spirit for others. We must look to those on whom the simple essentials of the Bible have made their practical impression, and who through the very process of enlightening which they have experienced in their own souls, are able to reflect that process back again on the souls of those in whose behalf they are laboring. And we repeat it, that in both of our established Churches there is a high-toned contempt, not for that agency which can learnedly demonstrate

the characters of the Bible, or cast a shrewd and intellectual regard on the impression that has been made by it, but for that agency which takes up the Bible and actually makes the impression—for that unlettered Methodism which in England has wrought its miracles, not of imaginary but of substantial grace upon the people—for that Sabbath teaching which, in the hands of lay Christians, promised fair in our own country to be a mighty instrument for reclaiming the population of our cities from the habits of profaneness and profligacy into which they have wandered.

There is a disposition on the part of official and formally constituted ecclesiastics to regard such men as the quacks or empirics of theology, who have not had the benefit of their finished education, who belong not to the regular faculty, and of whom therefore it may be feared that they are the bearers of deleterious poison which acts with mischievous effect on the moral and intellectual health of the great mass of the peasantry—those ready dupes of imposture whether in divinity or in medicine. They forget that there is not a perfect resemblance between these two professions —that while in the one human science works the whole practical effect, in the other human science works none of it—that they are very plain doctrines of the Word, which are as accessible to the mind of a peasant as of a philosopher, urged home with efficacy by God's Spirit—that Spirit which is surely as ready to be given to the ministrations of humble piety as of accomplished learning, seeing that God resisteth the proud and giveth grace to the humble—that it is thus that Christians are actually made and multiplied in our land. And thus we fear that, in the contempt with which in both our Establishments all the activities of religious zeal are now-a-days regarded—in the intolerance which they feel towards our more ardent and painstaking operatives in the cause, the Churches of both countries, while they retain the literary accomplishment which has so long adorned them, may wither into a kind of barren and useless inefficiency as to the great practical purposes for which they were ordained. And that mighty work of agency, which

if they were each to employ within their own bosom, might be turned to so mighty an account in the work of converting and moralizing our people, may either be discouraged into apathy or driven beyond the pale of the Establishment —may transfer to others the whole glory of extending and keeping alive the Christianity of our nation.

SERMON XXVII.

[Preached at Glasgow, in June, 1817.]

COLOSSIANS IV. 1.

"Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven."

It is very observable of Christianity, that while at one time it equalizes all the various ranks and orders of life, at another it presses the performance of such duties, and the practice of such submissions upon the lower orders, as would seem to recognize a wider distinction between one man and his fellow than was ever contended for by the most groveling minions of despotism. It tells us of the essential equality of all men. It is ever coming into contact with the most striking and important points of this equality. It, with an intrepid disregard of all the power and of all the grandeur of this world, delivers such doctrines as are most humiliating to the pride of the wealthy, and as are most elevating to the hopes and most sustaining to the dignity of the poor. This is a distinction which it makes little account of—when employed on those commanding generalities of the species, which form the great theme of the revelation from God to the world. And whether it adverts to the birth of man or to his dissolution—to the state of nakedness in which he came into the world, or to the state of nakedness in which we go out of it—to the corruption of the body after death, or its resurrection to the judgment-seat—to the common relationship of all with our Lawgiver, or the common need and dependence of all upon one Saviour—in a word, whether it adverts to the infirmities of our present condition, or to our capacities for the bliss and the immortality of another —in all these cases does it overlook the varieties of rank

and of fortune, and viewing the whole brotherhood of mankind as the members of one common family, does it speak the same language to all, and hold out to all the same offers and the same invitations and the same injunctions.

But one striking attribute of the Christian revelation is, that it leaves no one condition of humanity unprovided for. It not merely provides a rule and a doctrine for man in the general, but it has also its rules and its doctrines for all the leading specialities of office and of station which occur in society. And when, in particular, it condescends upon the duties of a servant, which it repeatedly does, one were apt to think that it assigns him to such a depth of humiliation as to inflict a positive outrage on the rights of our common nature. I am not adverting to the duty of not purloining —for this is not an apposite exemplification of the remark —this duty forming only part of a fair and equal interchange of obligation between the parties. But what are we to think of servants being enjoined to obey their masters in all things, and instead of doing so in the spirit of a grumbling reluctance, to do it heartily and cheerfully, and of good-will? What are we to think of servants, subject as they are to the outbreaking of the most unmerited and ungenerous abuse from their masters, being called upon not to answer again? Nay, what are we to think of the passive and the peaceful demeanor they are called upon to observe, and that not merely when they suffer, but when they suffer wrongfully?— of their being told that it is not enough that they take it patiently when they are buffeted for their faults, but that they should take it patiently even when they do well and are buffeted? Oh! how after the burden of such an indignity as this, can the condition of a servant be redeemed from the imputation of being indeed the most disgracefully ignoble that any son or daughter of humanity can fill! What security is there for the protection and the privilege of this numerous class of society? and what remaineth either to exalt their office, or to sustain the spirit of its occupier, if it shall thus be thrown open and defenseless to the caprices of every petty tyrant, and no resistance be

allowed to the wantonness and the willfulness of his manifold provocations?

And yet, my brethren, the spirit of a servant never reacheth to a truer or more noble elevation than when—keeping down the tendencies of nature in submission to the will of Christ—he maintains an uncomplaining patience under all the wrongs and all the severities which are inflicted upon him—and when instead of resisting any insult or any aggravation he may meet with, he offers it up in silence unto the Lord. He never stands upon higher ground than when this is his conduct and these are the principles upon which he rests it. He never so strikingly puts forth the high attitude of a Being who is immortal, and who knows his immortality, as when, upon his path being crossed by injury, he mildly forbears all anger, and resolutely bridling the expression of it, quietly commits his judgment unto God. His mind is never so filled with sublime anticipations, nor do the movements of his inner man ever betoken so much of the true sense and soul of dignity, as when, looking up to the Lord Jesus Christ as his master, and looking forward to the reward of the inheritance, and fired with the ambition of adorning the doctrine of the Saviour in all things, and having the Spirit of glory and of God resting on him, he can move his duteous and unruffled way amid the injustice of a master's exactions, or the still more galling injustice of a master's unmerited reproaches and unmerited frowns. The long-suffering of a Christian servant may in these circumstances look a tame and a pusillanimous thing to those who look to it with this world's eyes, and pass their judgment on it upon the world's principles; but I am quite sure, that in the high estimate of eternity, a servant never makes a greater exhibition of character, or reaches to a nearer resemblance of the Godhead Himself, than when he comes off a conquerer from such a trial of the charity that endureth—and when I put him by the side of the fretful oppressor, who is either so unprincipled as to defraud him, or so outrageous as to be ever and anon pursuing him with his restless and vindictive effusions, neither my reverence for his superior

wealth, nor for the chair of little brief authority on which he sits, can restrain me from offering to the attendant who toils beside him the tribute of a more honorable testimony, and the homage of a profounder reverence.

But this is not all which Christianity has done for that humble class of society whose cause every minister of Christianity should rejoice to advocate. It has not merely dignified the character of the believing servant, by supplying him with prospects which serve to cover and nobly to redeem all the wrongs and provocations that may be laid on him in this world—wherever its influences extend, it establishes in behalf of the servant a firmer protection than can be done by any one of the artificial institutions of society. Law may shield him from the grosser violations that are made on his person or his property; but law cannot enter under his master's roof, and there protect him from the countless ills of domestic tyranny. It cannot lay its restraints on the tone, or the habit, or the manner of a domineering insolence. It cannot forbid the constant harassings of peevishness. It cannot soften or relax the brooding scowl of displeasure. It cannot put an interdict on those haughty expressions of imperiousness or disdain which are felt by many a servant to be a greater hardship than all the drudgery that is laid upon him. It cannot make it imperative upon his superior ever to feel in his heart a cordiality towards all his domestics, and ever to maintain in all his intercourse with them a discreet and a kindly utterance. It cannot thus sweeten the toils of his employment, or make his burden feel light unto him. But what law cannot do for him, Christianity can do. It can enter his master's conscience. It can pour its influence over all the exercises of his history. It can subordinate him wholly to the authority of its doctrines and its laws. It prescribes a duty to the master as well as to the servant; and there is not an injunction which it lays upon the latter, without a counterpart injunction which it lays as bindingly and as imperatively upon the former. If you are charged against the act of trespassing upon their property by purloining it—they are as expressly charged

not to withhold from you any rightful claim, but to give you those things which are just and equal. If you, on the one hand, are forbidden to answer again—they, on the other, are forbidden the use of all insolent and abusive language. Ye masters, do the same things to them which I now enjoin them to do unto you, forbearing threatening. If you are reminded of your relation to Christ as His servant, they are also reminded of the very same relation, and are taught to recollect how they have a Master in heaven, and how with Him there is no respect of persons. And finally, if you are not to presume upon this equality because you have believing masters, but rather on that account to do them service—they, on the other hand, are to have a constant respect to the consideration that you are brethren, and heirs of the same hope, and fellow-travelers to the same eternity.

Thus let Christianity find an entrance among you, and all will be righted. It will do more both for peace and for enjoyment than can be done by any political adjustment whatever. It reaches where law cannot reach, and goes greatly beyond it in the provision which it makes both for the respect that should be awarded to the higher, and for the indulgence and security that should be extended to the lower orders of society. It disposes the former party to concede a great deal more than would satisfy the latter, and the latter party to submit in patience to a great deal more than would ever be claimed or exerted by the former. All that can be achieved by a legal or political contest is, that the parties meet each other half-way—all it can do is to draw a rigid line of demarkation, beyond which neither party is to pass without the outcry of resentment being lifted up by the other, or the proceedings of resistance being entered upon. Give me the most pure and efficient system of law in a country without Christianity, and you may see the parties standing where they should be, but standing in the proud attitude of defiance, and regarding each other with the haughty feelings of jealousy and disdain. Give me Christianity, and in addition to all the securities of law,

which in no wise or enlightened country will ever be neglected, you will see each party going beyond the rigid line of equality, and that not for the sake of any selfish acquirement to itself, but for the sake of some free and generous concession to others. You will see the limit of strict reciprocity often disregarded and trodden upon—not, however, in the way of encroachment, but in the way of kind and effusive liberality; and instead of a wall of partition, guarded with fearful vigilance by those who stand on the respective sides of it, would you see them mingling together as a wide and common species, and even going beyond the rigor of integrity in the exercise of all the humilities of the gospel, and in the fair flow and indulgence of all its charities.

But I must not forget that the text only speaks of those things which are just and equal, and that it therefore confines me to the duty which lies upon masters not to trespass on the line of equity in their dealings with their servants—not to exceed in their demands upon them the terms of their agreement, and not to fall short of those terms in the awarded remuneration—not to exact more work from the servant than was either specified by the express stipulation, or than the general habits of the place rendered a matter of clear and honest understanding between the parties—not to fall short in the amount of the payment, or what is of mighty importance to the comfort of a laboring family, not to come behind the time of the payment of the wages that are due to him. In a word, were I to ramify the text into all its applications, I might urge it upon you masters to be punctual in all your transactions with those who are beneath you—amid all the laxity and delay and cravings for a little more indulgence which are so usual in the world of merchandise, to struggle that your servants at least shall not suffer from the operation of such a habit—to make at all times a determined exception in behalf of those who have the whole of their subsistence depending on the wages they so hardly earn from you—to make it a primary and indispensable point of obligation that their claims shall be

attended to, and rather than that a single dependent should remain unpaid, to make every retrenchment upon your luxuries and your comforts; and above all, what more frequently disables a man from doing justice to those whom he employs than anything else, to make a most strict and conscientious retrenchment upon your speculations.

But the occurrence of the term speculation suggests to me one remark, which I beg to come forward with. You will most readily grant that you have no right, for the purpose of regaling your appetite for delicacies, to keep a costlier table than you are able to defray, and thus for the sake of a present indulgence, to trench upon that fund out of which your servants should obtain the full and regular amount of their wages. Now extend this principle.—You have no right, for the purpose of regaling your avaricious desires after a fortune, to embark on a costlier speculation than is warranted by your capabilities and your means, and thus for the sake of a future prospect to put to hazard the maintenance of all those families whose fathers you have pressed into the service of your ambition. You have no right to put to a desperate throw, I will not say your own wealth, but those numerous pittances which, in the shape of unpaid work, constitute the dependence and the all of those artificers whom you may seduce to share in the risk, and whom you may involve in the ruin of some rash and delusive enterprise. If it be a piece of the most selfish inconsideration toward the servant whom you hire, or toward the dealer from whom you buy, to dress more magnificently, or to build more magnificently, or to entertain more magnificently, than is consistent with the power of punctually discharging the wages of the one or the accounts of the other—then be assured, my brethren, that it is in every way as substantial, and I am sure as calamitous a piece of injustice to the workmen of this city, to trade more magnificently than on every principle of sober-minded computation is consistent with the power of rendering to them the stipulated return for the service they have yielded. In calling upon you to repress this spirit of adventure, and to

confine your measures within the compass of your means, I am pleading their cause—I am pointing your eye to a moral check upon that mischievous spirit of ambition which I honestly believe to be the main cause of the sufferings of our country—I am telling you that he who hasteth to be rich not only pierces himself through with many sorrows, but involves himself in the guilt of many crimes—that among others he commits an act of cruelty upon those whom he has induced to follow in the train of his personal aggrandizement—that, be it with thoughtlessness or be it with deliberation, he has, for the sake of self, committed the interest of the poor man and of the laborer to an ocean of dark and hazardous contingencies—that he, and such as he, are deeply responsible for those successive tides of adversity which set in at intervals upon the land—and that though every future harvest should pour abundance into our granaries, and every future Parliament should glow with virtuous and enlightened patriotism, and every future administration should give its unwearied labors to the cause of freedom and the best interests of the people, yet with this single corruption in the hearts of private individuals—with this rancorous and unbridled fervency of desire after wealth venting itself forth on extravagant speculation—with this sanguine and adventurous spirit which outruns calculation, and dashes its impetuous way, unmindful of the ruin which it scatters among the habitations of industry—with this, I say, in as tumultuous and unchecked operation as ever, we shall be doomed to see still what we have seen before—the ebbs and the flows of an unceasing alternation—at one time the feverish career of giddy and high-flown enterprise, and at another the sure visitation of distress, with all the bitterness of its outcries and all the gloom of its forebodings.

Suffer me one word more upon this part of my subject. I know as well as you that misfortune, the pure and single operation of misfortune, may entail even on a Christian merchant the adversity of a ruinous and unlooked-for visitation. And therefore it is not for us to point the finger of

condemnation at any individual, but it is our part to bear in mind how it is to another that he standeth or falleth; and we in humility and charity should abstain from the exercise of judgment on individual cases, and in no one case forget how the misfortunes of the virtuous ought with every generous bosom to place them on a higher elevation of respect than before, and to draw toward them a more affecting sentiment both of tenderness and veneration. But, on the other hand, you know as well as I do, that misfortune is not the alone cause of vicissitude in the history of business—that there is such a thing as a spirit of illegitimate adventure, which, being the very spirit of idolatry to the world, comes within the scope of those denunciations which ought to be thundered from the pulpit on every shade and degree of ungodliness; and that while we mean not the slightest insinuation against a single person concerned in these transactions, this general spirit ought to be contended with and exposed in all its culpability, and protested against not merely on account of its character, but on account of its consequences, as a spirit which in itself argues an utter devotedness to the creature, and which in effect robs many an industrious and deserving family of their just and equal expectations.

I conclude my present remarks upon this text with an observation which I think will recommend itself to your own experience of human life and character. You will perceive that the apostle is giving the advice of my text to his own formed and educated Christians. He is asking those who were masters among the members of the Church at Colosse to give such things as are just and equal to their servants, and he recommends this advice by a most affecting and at the same time an exclusively religious motive, "You know that you have a Master in heaven"—one to whom you are looking up for the reward of your services—one who as He has said that as you forgive others, so will you be forgiven, also says, that with what measure you mete it shall be measured to you again; and have a care lest by the act of withholding from your serv-

ants their just and lawful right, your Master who is in heaven shall on the great day of account lay upon you some awful visitation of remembrance and retribution. Observe, then, that all this right and becoming conduct which he is prescribing to masters, is conduct subordinated to the influence of a religious consideration, and the power of a religious motive. Now, it so happens that in this highly liberal and cultivated country there are many who require the operation of no such motive to incline them to all the more obvious and ordinary acts of justice toward their servants and inferiors. There is positively a very great number of men whom I could name, and whom I could not call Christians, and yet who at the same time could not find it in their hearts to disappoint the just expectations of their dependents, or to fall by a single iota behind the fulfillment of their more obvious and ordinary claims. I have seen men who, without Christianity at all, would positively quiver with indignation at the idea of a poor man and his family being reft of their dues. They, by a pure movement of generosity, would cheerfully undertake their cause—they would spurn with their whole soul taking any advantage whatever of a servant's helplessness or a servant's simplicity; and to them the meanness and the inhumanity of such a proceeding would altogether appear so odious as positively to revolt them against the imagination of it. All this, you will observe, without Christianity —without the impulse of any such motive as is supplied by a reference to God as our Master who is in heaven—without the mingling, in fact, of any religion in the business at all, but by the pure force of such a natural generosity of heart as is, to speak the truth, very prevalent in this our age among the higher orders of society. Now, for the sake of the important theological lesson upon which this question bears, let me observe, that the general spirit of one age is often more favorable to the growth of certain accomplishments of character than the general spirit of another age, and that such is the influence of this general spirit in the way of example and of repetition as to beget certain social

and humane virtues, independently of the operation of any religious principle whatever; and that thus what would need the stimulus of a Christian motive in some former generation, might in the present generation be very extensively practiced without the operation of any such motive at all. It marks a very rude and untamed state of society in the days of the apostle, that in his Epistles to Timothy and Titus, he should find it necessary to lay it down, with the authority of inspiration, as one of the requisites of a good bishop, that he should be no striker. A Christian motive was necessary, it would appear, to keep a bishop of those days from doing a thing which any bishop or minister now-a-days would be restrained from doing by a sense of its utter vulgarity and disgracefulness. A good bishop of those days would not do the thing because he saw a prohibition against it in the writings of the apostle, and to do it in the face of this prohibition would be ungodly. But any bishop, good or not, of the present day, would not do the thing because, whether he saw the prohibition or not in the book of God, he feels all the power of a prohibition in the general standard of manners, and to do it in the face of this standard would be ungentlemanly. I bring this forward merely in the way of illustration. For the truth is, that in respect of the duty of my text, too, the sense of the age has undergone a wondrous revolution, and has been greatly softened and liberalized since the apostle's days. If the picture which James gives of the rich men of his time were to be realized on an individual now, it would have the effect of making that individual an outcast from society. Were a man only convicted of keeping back by fraud the hire of his laborers, it would bring down upon him the execration of his fellows as well as the denunciations of God's outraged law. The latter motive might be essential to the restraining of men from this cruelty in cases where the former motive had no operation; but where the former motive has operation, as it has to a very great and general extent in our own country, then without the operation of the latter motive at all—or, in other words, without

one particle of homage to the author of Christianity, might we see men exhibit a most rigid adherence to the duty of my text, spurning with a quick sense of honor the idea of any departure from it, most faithfully acting up to all the ordinary claims and expectations of their dependents, and earning a character in society as the most humane and righteous and honorable of its members.

SERMON XXVIII.

[The date attached to the original short-hand manuscript of this sermon is October 31, 1822. Between this date and that of the discourse immediately preceding, the reader will perceive that an interval of more than five years occurs—an interval which he is to imagine as filled up by those discourses which have already been published.]

ZECHARIAH VII. 13.

"Therefore it is come to pass, that as he cried, and they would not hear; so they cried, and I would not hear, saith the Lord of hosts."

He who cried in the first clause of this verse is the Lord Himself, as is evident from the verses that immediately precede this text. The thing which the prophet complains of is, that when the Lord of hosts spake to them on a former occasion, saying, Execute true judgment, and show mercy and compassion every man to his brother—when He said this to the people of the land they refused to hearken, and stopped their ears that they should not hear; and "they made their hearts as an adamant-stone, lest they should hear the law, and the words which the Lord of hosts hath sent in His Spirit by the former prophets;" and therefore it was that there came a great wrath upon them from the Lord of hosts. And no doubt when visited with affliction, when brought very low because of their sins, when death and destruction stared them in the face, and the urgent desire of their hearts was for deliverance, they gave vent to their desire by prayer. But mark the upshot of their having refused to hear God on a former occasion—He refused to hear them on the present occasion. And this is the meaning of the text—"Therefore it is come to pass, that as He cried, and they would not hear; so they cried, and I would not hear, saith the Lord of hosts."

Now most of you who are here present are young in life,

and perhaps scarcely have known what it is to be afflicted. At all events, there is nothing more likely than that many of you may have thought little of the time when the last sickness shall come upon you, and you shall have at last taken yourselves to the bed from which you are never more to rise. Full of life and vigor, and rejoicing, perhaps, in the prospect of many days, your imagination may never have seriously dwelt on that awful event which is certainly coming upon you, even as it has come upon all who have gone before you. Your hearts may have been altogether with lessons, and play, and companionship, and such work as parents or masters have put into your hand—and little may you have reflected that, after all, the end of the whole matter on earth is, that you shall die—and that every minute which you breathe brings you that minute nearer to the time at which you shall die—and that this terrible day is coming upon you with a speed and a certainty from which there is no escaping. These are simple truths, my young friends; but it is just from the want of being impressed by plain and simple truths that there is so much of sin and suffering in the world. It is just because men will not take heed to the near and the obvious matters that lie before them, that they have gone so far astray in wickedness, and that so many are on the road to ruin everlasting. The great and practical error of man does not lie in his being ignorant of what is difficult to understand, but in his being heedless of that which is familiar to all understandings. It is not so much because my people will not learn, but because my people will not consider, that they are found on the path which leadeth to the chambers of hell. And so it is with many of you. You do not need to learn that you have to die; for this is what you all know as well as I can tell you. But you stand lamentably in need of more thoughtfulness, so as that you may consider, and hold it often in serious and solemn remembrance, that you are to die. This is what I want to impress upon you now. The dying bed will come—a weary season of pain and breathlessness and insufferable languor is before you. The path that leads

from the present world to the next world has to be traversed by all who are here present. How soon I know not; but that it will come sooner or later, you are all as well assured as I can possibly be. It is not a new truth that I offer to your notice, but an old that I would earnestly set forth to your thoughtful and tender and feeling recollection.

For think, my young friends, what in all likelihood will take place on that affecting occasion. You will then be standing on the brink of eternity, and it will look a dark and awful transition to cross over from the land of sense to the vast and unknown land that is before you, and a certain dread will lay hold of you, as you contemplate the fathomless abyss into which you are sinking; and then under the urgency of the fearfulness that may have overtaken you, will you gladly cry to the Lord that He may guide you in safety through the mysterious passage, and land you on a peaceful and happy shore. And if the thought of guilt shall then visit your bosoms, this may bring the foretaste of hell along with it—and so, amid the tossings of a sinner's restless bed, may you betake yourselves to prayer, and cry to the Lord for deliverance.

Now the thing which so deeply concerns you to know is, that when you cry then He may not hear you, and that because He is crying now, and you do not hear Him; you may lift the voice of prayer upon your death-beds, and He may turn a deaf ear thereto, because now in the heyday and cheerfulness of youth, when He lifts the voice of authority and bids you stand in awe and sin not, some of you, it is feared, are turning a deaf ear to all His warnings, and will none of His reproof. If you are heedless and unconcerned now about what He says to you, this is the return that will come upon you—He will then laugh at your calamity, and mock when your fear cometh. Oh, how much it concerns you to lay up through life what you will find in stead and in store when you come upon your death-beds! This is the simple expedient by which you may lay up a provision for the day of your extremity: Listen to God now, and He will not refuse to listen to you then.

Turn to Him a willing ear in the morning of your days, and in the evening of your days you will experience Him to be a God of good-will and of graciousness. Remember your Creator in youth, and He will not forget you in old age. Be found of Him now when He is seeking after you —so that when you come to the bed of your last agonies, you will not have a Saviour to seek, but a Saviour to enjoy.

But to be more particular, we should specify what is the cry or proclamation that God is lifting up now, and by your neglect of which you may bring down upon you God's neglect of you then, when the hour and the power of darkness shall at length overtake you. In the text it was God's law that He was proclaiming; it was His word which by His Spirit He had put into the mouths of the old prophets; this was what He spoke in the hearing of the people, and they made their hearts, it is said, as an adamant-stone against Him. They put a hardy and resolute defiance against the calls of authority and the threats of vengeance. When He entreated their obedience, they disregarded. In the day of their fancied security they refused all His expostulations—so that when the day of their disaster came, and they turned to the Lord, as they did not hear when He cried to them, so He would not hear when they cried to Him.

And thus, it is to be feared, is it with many, and very many, of our present reckless generation. He is calling to you directly by His Spirit, when the law, written in your consciences, admonishes you of the right and of the wrong; and you are hardening your consciences against Him when, all heedless of the admonition, you put it utterly away from you. He is crying to you by the prophets and the righteous men of old in that book which His Spirit hath dictated, and the words of which you have already learned to read—and it is your bounden duty to mind and to revere them; and you are just hardening yourselves in stout-heartedness against Him, when that word, which has been compared to a hammer breaking the rock in pieces, is yet unable to break that impregnable resistance wherewith so many ob-

stinate sinners can stand out against all the denunciations that are written therein. It is, indeed, most woeful to think of the stern and uncomplying metal of resistance which the soul and the conscience of man are capable of taking on. Every month finds him a harder and a more resolute sinner than before. Every act of transgression takes so much away from the delicacy and the tenderness of his conscience. The wickedness he at one time trembled to think of, he anon can commit and glory in. His moral sensibilities at length sink into utter decay. The preaching of the word cannot move him—the death of acquaintances on every side of him cannot shake him out of his determined rebellion—the tolling of the funeral bell sends no compunction into his steeled and inflexible bosom—the warnings of Providence do not affect him—and nothing will prevail upon him to feel or to consider till his own selfishness be touched by the agonies of his mortal disease, and the terrors of his own impending dissolution;—and then, to crown the sad history of infatuated man, does it turn out, that as God cried unto him in the days of his youth, and he would not hear, so when he cries on his dying bed, I will not hear, saith the Lord of hosts.

Let me bring this whole lesson more specifically to bear upon you, by urging upon you three leading particulars of the divine testimony, of which God is now making frequent and open proclamation in your hearing, but which if you do not hear, He will shut His ear and His tenderness against you when the day of your necessity arrives: and the first particular which we may gather from every page of His book, and also from the intimate consciousness—each in his own bosom, is that we have sinned against Him, and are now under rightful sentence of condemnation. There is none righteous, no. not one—all have fallen short of God's commandment and God's glory. There is none who understandeth, and none who seeketh after Him. And cursed is every one who continueth not in all the words of the book of His law to do them. These are the declarations of all being criminal and all being accursed before God;—and they are uttered, not for the sole purpose of terrifying you,

but for the purpose of prevailing on you to flee to the place of escape and deliverance. It is not to torment you before the time that God tries to light up the agonies of fear and of remorse in your bosom, but it is that you may be concerned how to find refuge from that threatened torment. He wants you to tremble at the thought of hell, not to make you miserable even before the door of that awful place is shut upon you; but He desires to set you trembling, in order that you may be led to flee from this coming wrath, and to betake yourselves to the appointed way of deliverance therefrom. But how many, alas! there be in our world who persist in profoundest lethargy under the terror and the threatening of all these denunciations. How many persist in their wickedness, and steel their unregenerated bosoms against the wrath and the vengeance that are denounced thereupon! How many, I fear, even among you, my young friends, who live as lightly and as unconcernedly as if there were no judgment and no hell—you will not hear when we tell you of sin and of vengeance. Conscience may offer now and then the intimation that you are not in friendship with God, and not in a fit state for dying and entering into His presence; but the lesson is thrown aside, and the guilt and the danger are forgotten, and among light-hearted companions you lose all sight of the coming eternity, and thus you do what the children of Israel before did; when God cried unto them they did not hear, and you will not hear when by His Bibles and His ministers, and the whispers of His Holy Spirit in your heart, He tries to fix and solemnize you by the thought, that in yourselves you are undone sinners, the blood of whose own souls will be required at your hands. And thus you may fare even as they did—you will at length be reduced to the helplessness of their sad misery, and then when death comes upon you, may you cry when it is too late. And so, as you will not hear God now when He crieth unto you, He may not hear you then, when you cry unto Him.

But there is another particular of the divine testimony that I must sound forth in your hearing—I have already

said that there is a future day of wrath—but I now say that there is a present day of acceptance. I have already said that you are sinners—but I now say that there is a Saviour for sinners. I have already said that you are under the curse of a violated law—but I now tell you of one who hath taken that curse upon Himself, who hath redeemed us from it by becoming a curse for us, who hung upon the tree for your offenses, and there bore the whole weight of His Father's displeasure—drinking to the very dregs the cup of our expiation, and pouring forth His soul unto the death, that we may live through Him. This is the gospel of Jesus Christ, of which proclamation is made every day from our Bibles, every week from our pulpits, every year from our solemn sacraments. God hath lifted up the cry of invitation unto all; and He now expostulates with us that we should return unto Him, and He bids us believe in Christ that we may be saved, and often does He tell us if we will only come unto Himself through the open door of Christ's mediatorship, He will forgive all and forget all. These are the cries of a Father after His wandering and disobedient children, for He does not want to lose them, but rather that they should turn unto Him and live. And yet, alas! how much are these cries of a Father's tenderness unheeded by a perverse and unthinking generation—what an insulting return does the Father of mercies meet from us, when all day long He stretches forth His hand to a rebellious and gainsaying people! Oh! it was a foul provocation to have broken His law; but how far more bitter the provocation is, when we thus turn a deaf ear to His gospel, and turn our back on His offers of reconciliation?—and this is done by all who lightly esteem Christ, by all who count the preaching of His cross to be foolishness, by all who, careless about sin, are equally careless about the sacrifice that has been made for it. Do you hear of Christ, and hear of Him without emotion, and without any desire after Him? Do the tidings of salvation fall heavily and unconcernedly upon your ears? Is it all like the sound of an unknown voice, without any power to touch or to awaken you? Then, indeed, you

affront God in the tenderest part, you dishonor His Son, you make Himself a liar by refusing His testimony respecting Him, you reject the offer of salvation that hath been brought to your door, you say—We shall persist in our sins, and we care not for the Saviour. The cry of gospel entreaty is lifted up in your hearing now, and you will not listen to it; and the cry for gospel mercy may arise from you then, when on the eve of bidding adieu to the world, you cast about for the peace and the interest of your eternity—because you can do no better, because you cannot help it. Oh! cast not away your own souls; listen to the Saviour who now standeth without, and knocketh at the door of your hearts; kiss Him while He is in the way. He is willing now to enter into friendship with you, and to manage your cause, and to take upon Himself the whole burden of your interest and reconciliation with God; but He will not always strive—His wrath will at length begin to burn; and if you refuse Him now, the day may soon overtake you when you will cry unto Him and He will not hear you.

But, lastly, God calleth unto all to forsake the evil of their ways and the evil of their thoughts. He bids all to repent as well as to believe the gospel. He hath uttered this solemn denunciation—that unless we repent we perish. He makes us to understand, that in turning to Christ we turn from our iniquities. He sounds this will and order of His imperatively in your hearing:—Break off your sins by righteousness.—Come out from among evil ways and evil acquaintances.—Burst asunder the entanglements and the enticements of vicious pleasure by which you are surrounded.—Be ye separate from sinners, and follow not a multitude to do evil. And to encourage you with the offers of strength and aid from above, that you may be enabled to prosecute the work of repentance and to perfect it, He says, Turn unto me, and behold I will pour out my Spirit upon you. This is the cry that He now lifts in your hearing—and will you dare after this to continue in the bonds of companionship with the ungodly? Will you choose the

despisers of God and of goodness for your intimates, and that merely because they live with you in the same street, or work with you under the same master. Will you thus expose your eternity at random to the evil influences of such acquaintances as you may happen to meet with in the world? You are young, and you may perhaps be laying your account with many days on this side of death, and may think that it is time enough to be good—that it is time enough to think of heaven, and of preparation for that awful and terrifying death which still lies at so remote a distance away from you. But I call upon you to feel the urgency of the text. Young as you are, God is lifting up a cry of expostulation and entreaty even unto you: Suffer little children to come unto me, says the Saviour—and is not this a cry of invitation to the least and youngest of you all? Children, obey your parents in the Lord, says one of His apostles—and is not this a cry of authority lifted up in your hearing? Your being young does not prevent God from crying unto you; but if you will not listen—this, when you come to be old, may prevent Him from hearing when you cry unto Him. Oh! persist not then, in this unconcern any longer. Open your hearts to the voice of Him that speaketh from heaven, and who, while grieved because of your sins, is yet waiting to be gracious. Harden your hearts no longer against Him, or they may at length become harder than the adamant. Think with yourselves, that if this evening I stand my ground against the cry which I have heard, then will I stand more firmly against another, and another, and another cry; and thus will your case be every day becoming worse, and your chance for heaven will every day become more desperate, and your contempt and carelessness about divine things will grow upon you from one day to another; and your whole life may be one continued resistance to the proclaimed grace of that God who is now plying you with messages of love, and entreating your return to the paths of peace and of pleasantness. Oh! hold out no longer, lest in return for His cry being unheard by you all your lives long, you will

at length send forth a fearful and a piercing and an exceeding bitter cry when death stares you in the face, and the terrors of the coming hell draw near to your affrighted soul, and the cry be disregarded, and the gate of mercy be shut, and the Spirit have left you to the fruit of your own ways, and an everlasting seal be set on that fountain which is now flowing out so freely, and to which you are now invited, that you may wash out your sins in the blood of the Lamb. Return unto God, and He will return unto you. —Seek Him while He is near.—Call upon Him while He is to be found.—He will receive you graciously.—He will love you freely if you will only go to Him now, and put yourself under the protection of His Son Jesus Christ, and under the bidding of Him as the Master whom you have chosen, and whom alone you are determined to serve.

SERMON XXIX.

[Preached at St. John's, Glasgow, on the second Sabbath of Nov. 1823.]

PSALM CXXXVII. 5, 6.

"If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy."

The exquisite pathos and beauty of this sacred composition gives it a high place even in the records of poetry. It is, indeed, one of its most precious effusions; and apart altogether from that which constitutes its highest recommendation to a spiritual man, there are about it touches of imagery and feeling that call forth a responding homage from the native sensibilities of every heart. The captive despondency—the dear yet drooping recollection of that more distant home—the fond and lofty aspirings of a patriotism which the ruthless hand of tyranny must only have riveted the more, and never could extinguish—these deeper agitations of the soul are so mellowed into softness, and the pensive and the picturesque are so mingled together in these accompaniments of the harp and the river, and the hanging willow upon its side, as to make this, even when regarded in the light of a Hebrew melody, the finest and most fascinating of them all.

Yet they are not the breathings either of a natural or a poetic tenderness, but those of grace and of the Spirit, wherewith at present we have immediately to do. This psalm, in fact, is mainly and essentially the utterance of religion. It is the complaint of men now bereaved of its solemnities and its services, and hurried into a Pagan land, where the worship of Israel was derided, and the God of Israel was unknown. They had both the griefs and the

fears of nature; but the chief burden of their grief is, that torn from the companionships of piety, and left to the cruel mockery of profane and unfeeling barbarians, their spirits had lost that wonted aliment by which all grace and all godliness are upholden; and the chief burden of their fear was, lest, in the withering atmosphere of that ungainly and ungenial neighborhood where they now breathed, this grace and this godliness should go into utter dissipation. There was little danger that they should ever lose the regards and the recollections of patriotism. There was little danger that even to the hour of death the scenes of late ancestral glory, and of their own happy boyhood, should not always recur as far the dearest to their imagination. There was a powerful guarantee in the universal laws and sensations of humanity, that when they looked back on the peace and gladness of younger days, every bosom should fetch its heavy sigh, and every eye should weep at the remembrance of them. There was no fear lest any of them should become apostates from the truth and the tenderness of nature; but there was another, a more fatal apostasy, on the brink of which these holy men of God felt that they were standing; and this psalm, we repeat, is the outpouring of souls firm in their purposes of religious integrity, yet fearful of falling away from it—eyeing with dismay the hazards of their exile from a priestly and a consecrated land, and summoning to their aid the high resolve, the solemn and appalling conjuration—"If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, if I forget the city of my God, let my right hand forget her cunning; and if I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy."

And we mistake it, my brethren, if we think that to be translated into a condition for feelings and purposes that are kindred to these, we must be visited with a kindred calamity—that upon us also an invasion and an overthrow and a captivity must come—that we must be wrested from our Christian homes, and carried far into savage or idolatrous retreats, where Sabbaths and sacraments and churches are unknown. That book, which was written for our admoni-

tion, on whom the latter ends of the world have come, however remote its historical narratives may be from any experience of ours, is replete all over with passages of direct and most familiar application to our daily affairs; and more particularly of this passage may it be affirmed, that there elapseth not one day of our lives in which the disciple of Jesus is not exposed to a transition as wide and as violent as from the land of Israel to the land of Babylon—in which, without one mile of locomotion, he does not traverse a moral and a spiritual distance as great as that which separated the mourners of our text from their beloved Jerusalem—in which he does not step, as it were, from one region to another, in the first of which he stood as at the gate of heaven, and in the second is exposed to all the withering secularities of the world. The Christian who is much exercised in the discernment of his own spirit, knows that there is in it a constant gravitation away from God; and that, were it not for an upward and aspiring tendency, which grace hath imparted and grace alone can uphold, it would instantly lapse into earthliness. If he have intelligently marked the fluctuation that taketh place in his heart on the ever-shifting occasions of his history—if he have contrasted aright the sacredness of his family prayer, and in the ordinary managements of his family the utter oblivion of all sacredness—if he have kept a record of the elevation to which at times he hath been borne upwardly in church, and then how he flattened to a level with the dust when surrounded again with the urgencies of business—if he ever breathed of a heavenly communion on the mount of ordinances, and felt how soon the companionships of everyday life scattered it away—he will admit that in reference to the Jerusalem above he is one of an exiled species—a stranger and sojourner in a distant land. Conscious how habitually it is that the things of sacredness slip away from his remembrance, his aspirations toward them will be frequent, and the heed that he gives to them will be earnest. There will be at all times a fearfulness upon his spirit because of its infirmity, and yet, like that of the captive Israelites, a solemn

and a strenuous purpose against it. It is indeed a kindred struggle, and there will be a kindred sympathy. He feels the text to be his own, and he uses it as a combative weapon against the bias of his earthly nature.—"If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy."

We have not time for all the generalities of doctrine and of remark which, under this text, we might most pertinently expatiate upon, and therefore hasten to the task of stimulating your own consciences to a faithful application of it. You may remember, my friends, the occasions of your history when a glow came upon your spirits that felt like a glow of sacredness, and you must remember how speedily it all evanished on your very first exposure to the atmosphere of this world's society. You may remember, when holding converse with some Christian author—with a venerable worthy, perhaps, of some former generation—with one of those mighty dead who still speaketh in some precious memorial that he hath left behind him of his own holy and heavenly contemplations—you may remember how he exercised the charm that could abstract you for one little hour from the frivolities of life, and pour into your mind the glory of those great elements among which he himself expatiated. But when leaving the closet, you must remember the descent as well as the elevation, and with what facility it was that you could step down to creep and grovel as before on the platform of ordinary men. You may remember a similar transition even in the converse that you have held with a living instructor—how pleasant to your ear was the chime of the morning bells that summoned you to his pulpit ministrations—how you caught a frame of sacredness from your very presence in the house of God—and how the lessons of piety came with a peculiar force upon your spirit, when, instead of being taken in by the eye from the pages of a written composition, they took their direct conveyance into the bosom from the sympathies of a heart in unison with your own. And we, moreover,

fear of many that they must remember how a Sabbath of lofty feelings, and when they seemed to breathe in the pure and elevated serene of an upper region, how such a Sabbath has been followed up by a week of utter desecration—how, from the beginning to the end of it, all their senses were steeped in worldliness—and that, throughout their six days, nothing was left to signalize their history from that of others who make of the seventh a free and festive holiday. And that, if possible, I may have a still nearer appeal to your consciences, some of you may have the fresh remembrance of that which felt like the unction of heaven upon your souls in the sacrament that has just gone by, and yet, in the short and rapid interval between, have met enough to convince you, that so soon as loosened from the altitude to which it had gotten, the soul sinks and gravitates again to the dust of its own kindred earthliness. These are but a few instances out of the many. They are only the signs and the specimens of a general law that operates at all times and throughout the whole extent of our degraded nature. They are the sad evidences of our banishment from heaven, of our disruption from God's unfallen family. They prove that there is an element within—an element of repugnance and of recoil from godliness—an accursed enmity in our spirits to the things of faith—a headlong tendency that weighs us down to that world of sense and of sight, among whose carnal delights and comfortable dwellings we could live for ever, and gladly consent to an eternal separation from all the glories of the upper Paradise. It is this, my brethren, which constitutes one and all of us exiles from the city of the living God. It is a sense of this that ministers to every aspirant the humbling conviction of his woeful distance and deficiency therefrom. It is because of this that he mourns and is in heaviness; while in reference to the great majority, we fear, that though all the alternations which we have now set forth be fully experienced, no practical regret is experienced along with it. Any religion they have is caught in glimpses or in passing emotions; it comes round at the stated period, and makes

way for other things which pass in busy succession through the circuits of their history; it has its insignificant corner in the whole system of their affairs. Meanwhile, life bustles onwards to its close; and after a procession of many feelings and many fugitive regards, among which religion had its place with other things, are there many who pass with spirits wholly unrenewed into the presence of God, with persons wholly unsanctified to the awards of the judgment-seat.

You are not to imagine that religion is like to one term of the series, to one article in the great inventory of human life; nor, on the principle that there is a time and a season for every thing, are you to exclude religion from its rightful ascendency over all the departments of human experience. You are not to view it as a chapter in your history, but rather as that which gives a quality and a style to the whole composition. You are not to confine it within the dimensions of a part, but to diffuse it as you would a coloring substance that leavens and impregnates the whole. It is very true that household engagements must be gone through. It is very true that business in all its manifold details must be attended to. It is very true that the cares of health and of daily bread and of a provision for your families are ever soliciting the regards of your spirit, and ever multiplying your avocations and anxieties. I freely concede that thus the life of man must be broken down into countless and ever-changing varities; but I contend, that in religion there is an amalgamating power by which it closes and coalesces therewith, and stamps a reigning character upon them all—that an individual might peruse and ponder and give himself to busy penmanship for hours in his counting-house—that he might bustle his way through the activities and negotiations of a market—that he might relax his wearied faculties in the bosom of the domestic circle, and there listen with delighted ear to the prattle of infancy—that he might indulge in all the gayeties of a benevolent heart, whether at home or in society—in a word, that he might pass from one scene and employment to another, and

yet carry through them all the decided aspect and temper of a Christian. He might no more resign, by any of these transitions, the complexion of a spiritual man than the complexion of his face; all the while might this characteristic sit as visibly upon him as any other of the characteristics which nature or habit hath bestowed. Whatever a man's engagements, or however they may shift and fluctuate from one to another, there still cleaves to him his sanguine, or his phlegmatic, or his melancholy, or, in short, his constitutional temperament, whatever it may be. And so to the true disciple there should cleave upon all occasions his Christian temperament. The anointing that hath given it to him is an anointing that remaineth. It manifesteth itself not in some things only, but in all; for such is the high demand of the religion that you profess, to do all things to the glory of God, to do all things in the name of Jesus.

There are many hearts to which the word of God reaches no farther than the surface, and like the seed which fell by the way-side, it is instantly taken away; and there are many more where it enters a little way within the surface, and there springeth up a rapid vegetation of sensibilities, and purposes, and vows, which having no root, like the seed that fell upon rocky ground all sicken and decay under the withering exposures of this world. It is against the deceitfulness of such emotions as these that I would like to guard you—it is the evanescent pathos as disjoined from the operation and the habitual power that is so very apt to minister to your bosoms a most treacherous complacency—it is lest the quick and transitory feeling should pass in your imaginations for the sturdiness of enduring principle, that I am jealous over you, and I trust with a godly jealousy. I would have you warned, my brethren, that Christianity may be so rooted as to yield the love and delicate efflorescence which the first rude blast will destroy; and not be so rooted as to become the object of a steadfast remembrance and steadfast regard, and so as that the blossoms of promise may be succeeded by the fruits of righteousness. It is because of the flower without the fruit, that a morning

of fair profession so often settles down into a manhood or an old age of inveterate worldliness—and that after a spring green with verdure and opening foliage, so many might apply the true and the tremendous saying, that the harvest is past, and the summer is ended, and we are not saved. You feel now—and I want to counteract the tide of your emotions by lifting up before your eyes the rough fruit of experience, and proclaiming how possible it is that you may forget afterwards. The delusions of our modern world are of as hurtful and as hazardous encounter as were the idolatries of the land of Babylon. Be forewarned and forearmed like the Israelites of my text—and be it your holy determination, as it was theirs, that the things of heaven shall never be forgotten. "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, if I forget Mount Zion, and the city of the living God, let my right hand forget her cunning. Let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, if I remember not Jerusalem above my chief joy."

I feel it most oppressively unpleasant to allude, however distantly to myself—and on the moment of touching upon the borders of egotism, there spring up a thousand delicacies which are most difficult to manage, and which one is utterly at a loss how to dispose of. They have really cost me some thought; but I have at length resolved that when holding converse with fellow-sinners on the high matters of eternity, any feeling of the sort ought to be suspended—that it is my duty on the present occasion to school down the repugnance altogether; and when anything has to be spoken which substantially affects so deep and mighty a concern as the wellbeing of your souls, no scruple and no ceremony should be permitted to stand in its way. It is quite palpable then to you all, so indulgently have I been dealt with by my hearers, that from first to last I have had a goodly attendance; and it is a question which concerns not me more than it does yourselves—what the peculiar magnetism is which can possibly account for it? I have had my own painful misgivings upon this subject—and more especially when I read that it is possible for man by his own wisdom

and his own words to make Christ of none effect—that the treasure of saving truth is deposited in earthen vessels, and therefore many may be drawn to gaze on the painted devices, the curious singularities of the vessel, without seeking or caring for any spiritual treasure—that there may be a cadence in the song which pleaseth the ear, but which after the performance is over dieth away into oblivion, and leaveth not an impression of power or of permanency upon the heart—that the holy apostles preached not themselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and that in His doctrine there is a simplicity, every deviation from which might perhaps be chargeable on the waywardness of the preacher's own imagination. These are the thoughts which at times have involved me in a certain ambiguity that is hard to be resolved—and for which, after all, the best touch-stone is the practical state of your own souls, the character of your present habits, the course of your future history.

It is thus that I would leave it; and thus only can it be made palpable to the eye of mortal, whether a genuine unction from on high hath descended upon you—whether the interest you have heretofore taken in the ministrations of this pulpit be altogether of earthly origin—or whether, indeed, it be heaven-born—a fire from the sanctuary above, or a spark of man's kindling—a meteoric glare that passeth away, or that light of Scripture and of the spirit which shineth more and more along the track of your worldly pilgrimage, and will at length usher you into the unclouded glories of eternity. Had every mournful feeling of the captives of Babylon been analyzed, it would have been found of some that they wept from patriotism, and of others that they wept from piety. The expression was the same in all —yet few of them, we have reason to believe, were Zion's mourners—and thus of the delight that may be felt throughout the continuance of gospel services, and the disappointment at their close. There might be mere humanity, and nothing more, in all our tenderness—the regret which nature feels at the breaking up of an earthly fellowship—the shock that is ever experienced by friendly hearts when their

wonted relation is dissolved. And cruel as it may seem thus to probe and to anatomize among these sensibilities that I myself have wounded—it is of truly religious importance to know, that in the workings of our mysterious nature, there may, on an occasion like the present, be a sorrow that hath naught of the spirit from above, there may be a grief which hath naught of godliness.

Be aware, then, my brethren, of those manifold treacheries to which the heart is liable, and seek for the plain and the practical evidences within you that you have indeed heard to the salvation of your souls. There is not one Christianity for the philosopher, and another for the peasant—there is not one spiritual repast served up for the cultivated and the classic few, and another for the homely and unlettered multitude. The garnishing may be different, and perhaps this is not wrong; but be assured, that whether it is to the poor that the gospel is preached, or to the sons and daughters of refinement, the substance of every right and wholesome ministration is the same. And to ascertain whether you have tasted of the bread of life—whether you have imbibed the true essence of spiritual nourishment—I look not to the gathering host, and the eager competition, and the arrested audience, or to the glow and the sentiment and the tragic sensibility that passes speedily away. These will subside, and only what is sterling will remain; and a few little months will throw light upon the question, whether you have only heard with the hearing of the ear, or the word of God hath found its secure and abiding lodgment within you? And even now, there may be a something which conscience can discern—a recollection of self, and of the changes which self hath experienced—that might give the token if not the assurance of good unto the soul. Have you felt, or do you now feel, an unwonted sense upon your spirit of its now manifest ungodliness? Hath your blindness to this been dissipated?—and now, adrift from the old security of nature, do you see what an outcast you are from holiness and heaven? Hath the unsettled controversy between you and God been a burden to your soul, and as it

roamed in quest of deliverance, did the tidings fall with welcome upon your ear, that unto you a Saviour has been born? Can you listen without antipathy to that gospel message which tells of the peace-speaking blood and the sanctifying Spirit, and can you now rest in the one—do you now pray for the other? Is the truth that Christ died for your sins, according to the Scriptures—is this the truth that hath the chiefest prominency in your regards, and the most habitual place in your remembrance? Is His name like ointment poured forth; and when you think of His work, even a propitiation for sin, do you feel it to be precious? How stand you affected now in reference to the Bible?—doth that phraseology which wont to offend, now come with a charm and a power upon your renovated taste? and do you now feel that dearer to your heart than all the splendors of human eloquence are the impressive simplicities of the gospel? In Scripture, even though alone, can you find the food that regales and satisfies? Do its memorable passages that often in other days sounded listlessly in your hearing—do they now come home with a sense that was before unfelt of their truth and importance; and as you travel through that record of heaven's embassies to the world, do you now gaze on beauties hitherto unrevealed, and greatly delight yourselves with treasures of wisdom that were at one time unnoticed and unknown? Have you now given up the festivities of riot and profaneness for the fellowships of piety—the thirst of this world's gain for the hope of the next world's glory—the pleasures of sin which are but for a season for the fruits of that righteousness which endureth for ever?—these are the elements which enter into the Christianity of cottages, and if they be not the very elements which are fixed and realized upon yourselves, then you have no Christianity. These are the only legitimate triumphs of the pulpit; and apart from these, eloquence and argument and learning are but profanation. Oh, how paltry they will appear amid the solemn realities of the judgment-seat! and what a tremendous reckoning of guilt should it indeed be found that between a vaporing

exhibition upon the one side, and an ecstasy of admiration upon the other, religion as a business—religion, in sober earnest and as a practical object, has been entirely disregarded!

I have already stated that all those delicacies which stood in the way of any utterance that is important to be made, should give place for the time at least, and until that utterance is past. And on this principle I now throw aside for one moment a ceremonial that might else have obstructed the declaration which I now hasten to make, and which I deem to be even of Christian importance that you should hear. The pulpit ministrations under which many of you have now sat for upwards of eight years, have I trust been held by most of you as the ministrations of a man in earnest—that you at least recognized in them an expression and perhaps an honest sense of the paramount worth of the soul; and whatever their manifold imperfections may have been, (and sure I am that they are without reckoning,) they have often borne utterance in your hearing to the supremacy of eternal things when put by the side of this world's gayest and even most glorious fascinations. Now to many an unpracticed eye the movement that I now make might seem in a most painful and puzzling incongruity with all this; a transition from the pulpit to the academic chair might be pronounced but a dereliction of sacredness for science—of religion and its holy services for the pomp and the pride and the heathenism of philosophy. When such a charge is preferred in the spirit of calumny, it is not worthy of a moment's attention; but when it cometh as the complaint of humble but wounded piety—when worth and charity and Christian tenderness have been known to weep over it as a sore desecration—when a shock has been given thereby to faithful and to feeling souls, and something like a scandal is apprehended to that cause which is dearest to their bosoms from the desertion of one whom they had ranked among the most zealous of its advocates—when they are sensibilities like these with which we have to deal—the sorrows of honest affection and offended principle—

it were barbarous indeed not to venerate the sanctity of such a grief, or to withhold any avowal that might satisfy and soothe it.

There is no time, nor do I think this a place for argument; and all therefore which I can at present do to reassure the conviction that has been in some degree unsettled is to make averment in your hearing—and I do it as in the presence of God, and from the depths of my own conscious sincerity, that on retiring from the direct business of the Church, I still regard that Church as the most glorious instrument for the moral and spiritual regeneration of our land—that with this our Zion are linked all my fondest associations. whether of patriotism or of piety—that as holy men of old took pleasure in the stones of Jerusalem, and favored the very dust thereof, so dear to my recollection is every related thing which calls to mind the business of congregations and parishes, that, even apart from the high thought of each solemn assembly being an assembly of immortals, there is naught on earth which has such an impress of moral loveliness to my eye as its groups of decent and devout worshipers, and naught that falls with sweeter cadence upon my ear than the voice of their melting psalmody. But this is the mere poetry of religion, and these but the good and the graceful accompaniments that attend the exhibition of it in time. The pith and sterling of its excellence lies in its bearing upon eternity; the elements wherewith it is mainly conversant are the undying interests of the soul, the sin by which it is tainted, the Saviour by whom it is restored, the hell to which by nature it is so fast hastening, the heaven for which by grace it is invested with all the meet and necessary endowments. These are the dread and the solemn realities wherewith a minister of the everlasting gospel has to do, and when put by the side of these all the glories of human science vanish into the frivolities of childhood. This is true Christian arithmetic. In all the calculations of usefulness this is the principle that should never be overlooked—nor, with humility be it spoken, do I think that I have been left to overlook or to err in the ap-

plication of it. From one of the thousand streams in our Establishment—a deep and a copious one, it must be admitted, but still a stream—a way hath been opened up to one of its emanating fountain-heads. From the vocation of laboring as one of the many teachers or prophets in our Church, I now enter upon the vocation of laboring in a school of the prophets. From the business of directly working the machine, I have been recalled to the business of a guidance and a guardianship over its elementary principles—or, in a manner, of feeding and regulating the fire that actuates its movements. From the deep exhaustion—not incurred at the home-walk of my parochial managements, for at all times was there a charm and a tranquillity in these—but from the deep exhaustion of hurry and fatigue and manifold distractions from without, have my footsteps been lured into a most congenial resting-place, among whose academic bowers Rutherford and Halyburton spent the evening of their days, and amid whose venerable ruins their bodies now sleep until the resurrection of the just. Should those high and heavenly themes on which they expatiated through life, and which shed a glory over their death-beds, ever cease to be dear unto my bosom—should the glare of this world's philosophy ever seduce me from the wisdom and simplicity of the faith—should Jesus Christ and Him crucified not be the end of all my labors in expounding the law of righteousness—then let the fearful judgments of heaven blight and overcast the faculties that I thus have prostituted. If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, if I forget thee, O thou Church and city of my God, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy.

I have spoken to you, my brethren, in much feebleness, and in the present state of my feelings have been wholly unable to do justice to this day's argument. There are topics on which I dare hardly so much as enter, and on which, perhaps, instead of adventuring any utterance in this place, it were more safe to restrain the struggling feel-

ings, and consign them all back to those silent depositories of the heart where gratitude or good will to you all shall ever be indelibly engraven. Yet let me hurry over this dangerous course, or at least attempt how much I can overtake of it in a few moments of rapid articulation. I will never forget that it is your princely beneficence which has carried me forward in the enterprise of covering the parish with those institutions both of scholarship and of piety that have done most to grace and to dignify the people of our beloved land. I will never forget the labors of that devoted band to whose union and whose perseverance I still look for even greater services than they have ever yet rendered in the cause of Christian philanthropy. I never will forget the unexcepted welcome and kindness of my parochial families, among whom the cause that to the superficial eye looks unpopular and austere, hath now found its conclusive establishment. I never will forget the indulgence and the friendly regards of this congregation ; and I beg to assure each and all of them that if a cold and ungenial apathy, whether of look or of manner, was all the return they ever could obtain for their demonstrations of Christian affection towards myself, it was not because I had not the conviction of that manifold good-will which was on every side of me, but that moving in a wide and busy sphere, and hurried in the course of a few minutes from one act of intercourse to another with more than a thousand of my fellows, my jaded and overborne feelings could not keep pace with it. There are hundreds, and hundreds more, whom in person I could not overtake, but whom, in the hours of cool and leisurely reflection, I shall know how to appreciate. And when I gaze on that quarter—the richest to me of all the wide horizon in the treasures of cordiality and grateful remembrance—then sweeter than to the eye are those tints of loveliness which the western sun stretches in golden clouds above it, will be the thought of all the worth, and the tenderness and the noble generosity that are there. Oh! I never can forget the city of so many Christian and kind-hearted men. I never will forget the

countenance I have gotten from its upright and patriotic citizens.

Let me entreat as one parting memorial, that you will treasure up the summary of my own deeply felt experience. Martin Luther hath pronounced it to be the article of a standing or a falling Church, even that of justification by faith and the righteousness of Christ, or that the Church will stand which keeps to Christ, and that the church will fall by which he is forgotten. The same truth would I record in the hearing of you all—not in the shape of a mere catechetical dogma—not as one of the catechetical orthodox doctrines—not as an assumption laid upon the consciences of men by the hand of human intolerance—not, in one word with any of these accompaniments which serve to revolt many a generous spirit, and to invest this precious, this venerable truth, with the air of a severe and scholastic controversy. I should like it to drop as balm on every weary and agitated spirit, and to assure him that if in time past he hath labored to establish a righteousness of his own, and that still his conscience warns him that he is as far both from rest and from spiritual affection as before, then let him wrap himself round in the garment of that ready made righteousness which Christ hath brought in, and all will be light and love and liberty. This indeed is the power of God and the wisdom of God to salvation. This has a regenerating charm, not merely to tranquilize the sinner's fears, but to turn him into the ways of new obedience. The great apostle was determined to know nothing else among his people but Jesus Christ, and Him crucified; and this, not to darken the ample field of revelation, and leave nothing to the eye of the beholder but one naked and solitary apex but to place him on a summit whence he may descry the whole richness and variety of the prospect that is spread out before him. Let me entreat your frequent, your earnest perusal, accompanied with prayer, of the fifth chapter of St. Paul's Second Epistle to the Corinthians, where the hope of immortality and the gift of the Spirit, and the walk of faith, and the acceptance of the life that bears throughout

all its history a reference to the judgment-seat, and the principle of Christian obedience, and the mighty change implied in Christian regeneration, and the beseeching tenderness of God, and his free overtures of reconciliation to all,—where these are found to mingle together, not, it is true, according to the forms of an artificial system, but in the very order of God's own Spirit. Oh! to learn to suspend the whole on this master proposition, that He hath made Christ to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him!

SERMON XXX.

[A few years ago Dr. Chalmers looked over and carefully assorted and classified those of his unpublished pulpit preparations which were in short hand, a large mass of which is still existing. Out of these he selected a few which he extended into long hand, four of which, viz., Sermons xx., xxi., xxii., xxviii., have in the present volume been presented to the reader. The sermon which follows was one of these, but as it was more than simply re-written, as it was remolded in the transcription, and became Dr. Chalmers' most favorite sermon in later years, I have thought it right to place it as belonging to the period which succeeded the Glasgow ministry. It was written originally in two parts, and preached at Kilmany on October 2, and October 9, 1814. Even then more than ordinary value appears to have been attached to it by its author, as he repeated the delivery of both parts at Kilmany on July 2, 1815, the last Sabbath but one before leaving that parish. He was much interested himself in discovering it and re-employing it many years after he left Glasgow—after an interval, as he himself calculated, of about twenty years. How very frequently he used it after its recovery, all who of late years have had frequent opportunities of hearing him preach, will remember. He chose it as the sermon to be delivered, when on a very memorable Sabbath he preached to a large assemblage in the lawn before Banchory House, on 10th September 1843; and also when, to a smaller audience, but in a locality which deeply interested him, he preached in the Free Church by St. Mary's Loch, in April, 1846.]

ISAIAH VII. 3–5.

"Fury is not in me: who would set the briers and thorns against me in battle? I would go through them, I would burn them together. Or let him take hold of my strength, that he may make peace with me; and he shall make peace with me."

There are three distinct lessons in this text. The first, that fury is not in God: the second, that He does not want to glorify Himself by the death of sinners—"Who would set the thorns and briers against me in battle?" the third, the invitation—"Take hold of my strength, that you may make peace with me; and you shall make peace with me."

I. First, then, Fury is not in God. But how can this be? is not fury one manifestation of His essential attributes?

do we not repeatedly read of His fury—of Jerusalem being full of the fury of the Lord—of God casting the fury of His wrath upon the world—of Him rendering His anger upon His enemies with fury—of Him accomplishing his fury upon Zion—of Him causing his fury to rest on the bloody and devoted city? We are not therefore to think that fury is banished altogether from God's administration. There are times and occasions when this fury is discharged upon the objects of it; and there must be other times and other occasions when there is no fury in Him. Now, what is the occasion upon which He disclaims all fury in our text? He is inviting men to reconciliation; He is calling upon them to make peace; and He is assuring them, that if they will only take hold of His strength, they shall make peace with Him. In the preceding verses He speaks of a vineyard; and in the act of inviting people to lay hold of His strength, He is in fact inviting those who are without the limits of the vineyard to enter in. Fury will be discharged on those who reject the invitation. But we cannot say that there is any exercise of fury in God at the time of giving the invitation. There is the most visible and direct contrary. There is a longing desire after you. There is a wish to save you from that day in which the fury of a rejected Saviour will be spread abroad over all who have despised Him. The tone of invitation is not a tone of anger—it is a tone of tenderness. The look which accompanies the invitation is not a look of wrath—it is a look of affection. There may be a time, there may be an occasion when the fury of God will be put forth on the men who have held out against Him, and turned them away in infidelity and contempt from His beseeching voice; but at the time that he is lifting this voice—at the time that He is sending messengers over the face of the earth to circulate it among the habitations of men—at the time particularly among ourselves, when in our own place and our own day Bibles are within the reach of every family, and ministers in every pulpit are sounding forth the overtures of the gospel throughout the land—surely at such

a time and upon such an occasion, it may well be said of God to all who are now seeking His face and favor, that there is no fury in Him.

It is just as in the parable of the marriage feast: many rejected the invitation which the king gave to it—for which he was wroth with them, and sent forth his armies and destroyed them, and burned up their city. On that occasion there was fury in the king, and on the like occasion will there be fury in God. But well can He say at the time when He is now giving the invitation—there is no fury in me. There is kindness—a desire for peace and friendship—a longing earnestness to make up the quarrel which now subsists between the Lawgiver in heaven, and His yet impenitent and unreconciled creatures.

This very process was all gone through at and before the destruction of Jerusalem. It rejected the warnings and invitations of the Saviour, and at length experienced His fury. But there was no fury at the time of His giving the invitations. The tone of our Saviour's voice when He uttered—"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem," was not the tone of a vindictive and irritated fury. There was compassion in it—a warning and pleading earnestness that they would mind the things which belong to their peace; and at that time when He would willingly have gathered them as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings—then may it well be said that there was no fury in the Son of God, no fury in God.

Let us make the application to ourselves in the present day. On the last day there will be a tremendous discharge of fury. That wrath which sinners are now doing so much to treasure up will all be poured forth on them. The season of God's mercy will then have come to an end; and after the sound of the last trumpet, there will never more be heard the sounding call of reconciliation. Oh, my brethren, that God who is grieved and who is angry with sinners every day, will in the last day pour it all forth in one mighty torrent on the heads of the impenitent. It is now gathering and accumulating in a store-house of vengeance;

and at the awful point in the successive history of nature and providence, when time shall be no more, will the door of this store-house be opened, that the fury of the Lord may break loose upon the guilty, and accomplish upon them the weight and the terror of all His threatenings. You misunderstand the text, then, my brethren, if you infer from it that fury has no place in the history or methods of God's administration. It has its time and its occasion—and the very greatest display of it is yet to come, when the earth shall be burned up, and the heavens shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, and the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on those who know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; and they shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power. It makes one shudder seriously to think that there may be some here present whom this devouring torrent of wrath shall sweep away; some here present who will be drawn into the whirl of destruction, and forced to take their descending way through the mouth of that pit where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched; some here present who so far from experiencing in their own persons that there is no fury in God, will find that throughout the dreary extent of one hopeless and endless and unmitigated eternity, it is the only attribute of His they have to do with. But hear me, hear me ere you have taken your bed in hell; hear me, ere that prison door be shut upon you which is never, never again to be opened! hear me, hear me ere the great day of the revelation of God's wrath comes round, and there shall be a total breaking up of that system of things which looks at present so stable and so unalterable! On that awful day I might not be able to take up the text and say—that there is no fury in God. But, oh! hear me, for your lives hear me—on this day I can say it. From the place where I now stand I can throw abroad amongst you the wide announcement—that there is no fury in God; and there is not one of you into

whose heart this announcement may not enter, and wel come will you be to strike with your beseeching God a league of peace and of friendship that shall never be broken asunder. Surely when I am busy at my delegated employment of holding out the language of entreaty, and of sounding in your ears the tidings of gladness, and of inviting you to enter into the vineyard of God—surely at the time when the messenger of the gospel is thus executing the commission wherewith he is charged and warranted, he may well say—that there is no fury in God. Surely at the time when the Son of God is inviting you to kiss Him and to enter into reconciliation, there is neither the feeling nor the exercise of fury. It is only if you refuse, and if you persist in refusing, and if you suffer all these calls and entreaties to be lost upon you—it is only then that God will execute His fury, and put forth the power of His anger. And therefore He says to us, "Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and ye perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little." Such, then, is the interesting point of time at which you stand. There is no fury in God at the very time that He is inviting you to flee from it. He is sending forth no blasting influence upon the fig-tree, even though hitherto it had borne no fruit, and been a mere cumberer of the ground, when He says, we shall let it alone for another year, and dig it, and dress it, and if it bear fruit, well; and if not, then let it be afterwards cut down. Now, my brethren, you are all in the situation of this fig-tree; you are for the present let alone; God has purposes of kindness towards every one of you; and as one of His ministers I can now say to you all—that there is no fury in Him. Now when the spiritual husbandman is trying to soften your hearts he is warranted to make a full use of the argument of my text—that there is no fury in God. Now that the embassador of Christ is plying you with the offers of grace and of strength to renew and to make you fruitful, he is surely charged with matter of far different import from wrath and threatening and vengeance. Oh! let not all this spiritual husbandry turn out to be unavailing; let not

the offer be made now, and no fruit appear afterwards; let not yours be the fate of the barren and unfruitful fig-tree. The day of the fury of the Lord is approaching. The burning up of this earth and the passing away of these heavens is an event in the history of God's administration to which we are continually drawing nearer; and on that day when the whole of universal nature shall be turned into a heap of ruins, and we shall see the gleam of a mighty conflagration, and shall hear the noise of the frame-work of creation rending into fragments, and a cry shall be raised from a despairing multitude out of the men of all generations, who have just awoke from their resting-places—and amid all the bustle and consternation that is going on below, such a sight shall be witnessed from the canopy of heaven as will spread silence over the face of the world, and fix and solemnize every individual of its incumbent population. Oh, my brethren, let us not think that on that day when the Judge is to appear charged with the mighty object of vindicating before men and angels the truth and the majesty of God—that the fury of God will not then appear in bright and burning manifestation. But what I have to tell you on this day is, that fury is not in God—that now is the time of those things which belong to the peace of our eternity; and that if you will only hear on this the day of your merciful visitation, you will be borne off in safety from all those horrors of dissolving nature, and amid the wild war and frenzy of its reeling elements, will be carried by the arms of love to a place of security and everlasting triumph.

II. This brings us to the second head of discourse—God is not wanting to glorify Himself by the death of sinners—"Who would set the thorns and the briers against me in battle?" The wicked and the righteous are often represented in Scripture by figures taken from the vegetable world. The saved and sanctified are called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord that He might be glorified. The godly man is said to be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, which bringeth forth its fruit in its

season. The judgment which cometh upon a man is compared to an ax laid to the root of a tree. A tree is said to be known by its fruits; and as a proof that the kind of character of men is specified by the kind of tree in the woods, we read that of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of the bramble-bush gather they grapes. You will observe that the thorn is one of the kinds instanced in the text, and when God says, I would go through them, I would burn them together, He speaks of the destruction which cometh on all who remain in the state of thorns and briers; and this agrees with what we read in the epistle to the Hebrews, "That which beareth thorns and briers is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing, whose end is to be burned."

Thorns and briers are in other places still more directly employed to signify the enemies of God. "And the light of Israel shall be for a fire," says one of the prophets, "and his Holy One for a flame, and it shall burn and devour His thorns and His briers in one day." Therefore, when God says in the text, "Who would set the thorns and the briers against me in battle? I would go through them, I would burn them together," He speaks of the ease wherewith He could accomplish His wrath upon His enemies. They would perish before Him like the moth. They could not stand the lifting up of the red right arm of the displeasure of Almighty God. Why set up, then, a contest so unequal as this? Why put the wicked in battle array against Him who could go through them and devour them in an instant by the breath of His fury? God is saying in the text that this is not what He is wanting. He does not want to set Himself forth as an enemy, or as a strong man armed against them for the battle—it is a battle He is not at all disposed to enter into. The glory He would achieve by a victory over a host so feeble, is not a glory that His heart is at all set upon. Oh, no! ye children of men, He has no pleasure in your death; He is not seeking to magnify Himself by the destruction of so paltry a foe; He could devour you in a moment: He could burn you up like stubble; and you mistake it if you think that renown on so poor a field

of contest is a renown that He is at all aspiring after. Who would set the grasshoppers in battle array against the giants? Who would set thorns and briers in battle array against God? This is not what He wants: He would rather something else. Be assured, He would rather you were to turn, and to live, and to come into His vineyard, and submit to the regenerating power of His spiritual husbandry, and be changed from the nature of an accursed plant to a tree of righteousness. In the language of the next verse, He would rather that this enemy of His, not yet at peace with Him, and who may therefore be likened to a brier or a thorn—He would rather than he remained so that he should take hold of God's strength, that he may make peace with Him—and as the fruit of his so doing, he shall make peace with Him.

Now tell me if this do not open up a most wonderful and a most inviting view of God? It is the real attitude in which He puts Himself forth to us in the gospel of His Son. He there says, in the hearing of all to whom the word of this salvation is sent, "Why will ye die?" It is true that by your death He could manifest the dignity of His Godhead; He could make known the power of His wrath; He could spread the awe of His truth and His majesty over the whole territory of His government, and send forth to its uttermost limits the glories of His strength and His immutable sovereignty. But He does not want to magnify Himself over you in this way; He has no ambition whatever after the renown of such a victory, over such weak and insignificant enemies. Their resistance were no trial whatever to His strength or to His greatness. There is nothing in the destruction of creatures so weak that can at all bring Him any distinction, or throw any aggrandizement around Him. And so in Scripture everywhere do we see Him pleading and protesting with you that He does not want to signalize Himself upon the ruin of any, but would rather that they should turn and be saved.

And now, my brethren, what remains for you to do? God is willing to save you: are you willing to be saved?

The way is set before you most patently and clearly in the Bible—nay, the very text, brief as it is, points out to you the way, as I shall endeavor to explain and set before you in the third head of discourse. But meanwhile, and all the better to secure a hearing from you, let me ask you to lay it upon your consciences, whether you are in a state that will do for you to die in. If not, then I beseech you to think how certainly death will, and how speedily it may, come upon the likeliest of you all. The very youngest among you know very well, that if not cut off previously—which is a very possible thing—then manhood will come, and old age will come, and the dying bed will come, and the very last look you shall ever cast on your acquaintances will come, and the agony of the parting breath will come, and the time when you are stretched a lifeless corpse before the eyes of weeping relatives will come, and the coffin that is to inclose you will come, and that hour when the company assemble to carry you to the churchyard will come, and that minute when you are put into the grave will come, and the throwing in of the loose earth into the narrow house where you are laid, and the spreading of the green sod over it—all, all will come on every living creature who now hears me; and in a few little years the minister who now speaks, and the people who now listen, will be carried to their long homes, and make room for another generation. Now, all this, you know, must and will happen—your common sense and common experience serve to convince you of it. Perhaps it may have been little thought of in the days of careless and thoughtless and thankless unconcern which you have spent hitherto; but I call upon you to think of it now, to lay it seriously to heart, and no longer to trifle and delay, when the high matters of death and judgment and eternity are thus set so evidently before you. And the tidings wherewith I am charged—and the blood lieth upon your own head and not upon mine, if you will not listen to them—the object of my coming amongst you, is to let you know what more things are to come; it is to carry you beyond the regions of sight and

of sense to the regions of faith, and to assure you, in the name of Him who cannot lie, that as sure as the hour of laying the body in the grave comes, so surely will also come the hour of the spirit returning to the God who gave it. Yes, and the day of final reckoning will come, and the appearance of the Son of God in heaven, and His mighty angels around Him, will come, and the opening of the books will come, and the standing of the men of all generations before the judgment-seat will come, and the solemn passing of that sentence which is to fix you for eternity will come. Yes, and if you refuse to be reconciled in the name of Christ, now that He is beseeching you to be so, and if you refuse to turn from the evil of your ways, and to do and to be what your Saviour would have you, I must tell you what that sentence is to be—"Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."

There is a way of escape from the fury of this tremendous storm. There is a pathway of egress from the state of condemnation to the state of acceptance. There is a method pointed out in Scripture by which we, who by nature are the children of wrath, may come to be at peace with God. Let all ears be open then to our explanation of this way, as we bid you in the language of our text take hold of God's strength, that you may make peace with Him, and which if you do, you shall make peace with Him.

III. Read now the fifth verse :—"Or let him take hold of my strength, that he may make peace with me ; and he shall make peace with me." *Or* here is the same with *rather*. Rather than that what is spoken of in the fourth verse should fall upon you—rather than that I should engage in battle with mine enemies—rather than that a result so melancholy to them should take place, as my going through them and burning them together—rather than that all this should happen, I would greatly prefer that they took hold of my strength in order to make peace with me ; and I promise, as the sure effect of this proceeding, that they shall make peace with me. We have not far to seek for

what is meant by this strength, for Isaiah himself speaks (ch. xxxiii. 6) of the strength of salvation. It is not your destruction but your salvation that God wants to put forth His strength in. There has strength been already put forth in the deliverance of a guilty world—the very strength which He wants you to lay hold of. He will be glorified in the destruction of the sinner, but He would like better to be glorified by his salvation. To destroy you is to do no more than to set fire to briers and thorns, and to consume them; but to save you—this is indeed the power of God and the wisdom of God—this is the mighty achievement which angels desire to look into—this is the enterprise upon which a mighty Captain embarked all the energy that belonged to Him, and traveled in the greatness of His strength until that He accomplished it; and now that it is accomplished, God would much rather be glorified in the salvation of His saints, than glorified in the destruction of sinners. (2 Thess. i. 7, 10.) God will show His wrath, and make His power known in the destruction of the sinner. But it is a more glorious work of power to redeem that sinner, and this He engages to do for you, if you will take hold of His strength. He would greatly prefer this way of making His power known. He does not want to enter into battle with you, or to consume you like stubble by the breath of His indignation. No; He wants to transform sinners into saints: He wants to transform vessels of wrath into vessels of mercy, and to make known the riches of His glory on those whom He had afore prepared unto glory. There is a strength put forth in the destruction of the sinner, but there is also a strength put forth in the salvation of a sinner, and this is the strength which He wants you to lay hold of in my text—this is the strength by the display of which He would prefer being glorified. He would rather decline entering into a contest with you sinners; for to gain a victory over you would be no more to Him than to fight with the briers and the thorns, and to consume them. But from enemies to make friends of you; from the children of wrath to transform you into the children of

adoption; from the state of guilt to accomplish such a mighty and a wonderful change upon you, as to put you into the state of justification; from the servants of sin to make you in the day of His power the willing servants of God; to chase away from your faculties the darkness of nature, and to make all light and comfort around you; to turn you from a slave of sense, and to invest with all their rightful ascendency over your affections the things of eternity; to pull down the strongholds of corruption within you, and raise him who was spiritually dead to a life of new obedience;—this is the victory over you which God aspires after. It is not your destruction or your death that He delights in, or that He wants to be glorified by—it is your thorough and complete salvation from the punishment of sin, and the power of sin, on which He is desirous of exalting the glory of His strength, and this is the strength which He calls you to take hold upon.

Let me now, in what remains, first say a few things more upon this strength—the strength of salvation which is spoken of in the text—and then state very briefly what it is to lay hold of it.

And first we read of a mighty strength that had to be put forth in the work of a sinner's justification. You know that all men are sinners, and so all are under the righteous condemnation of God. How, in the name of all that is difficult and wonderful, can these sinners ever get this condemnation removed from them? By what new and unheard of process can the guilty before God ever again become justified in His sight? How from that throne, of which it is said that judgment and justice are the habitation, can the sentence of acquittal ever be heard on the children of iniquity? How can God's honor be kept entire in the sight of angels, if we men who have repeatedly mocked Him and insulted Him, and made our own wish and our own way take the precedency of His high and solemn requirements—if we, with all this contempt of the Lawgiver expressed in our lives, and all this character of rebellion against Him written upon our foreheads, shall be ad-

mitted to a place of distinction in heaven—and that too after God has committed Himself in the hearing of angels —after He had given us a law by the disposition of angels, and we had not kept it—and after He had said how the wicked shall not go unpunished, but that cursed is every one who continueth not in all the words of the book of God's law to do them? But what is more, it was not merely the good and the obedient angels who knew our rebellion—the malignant and fallen angels not only knew it, but they devised and they prompted it. And how, I would ask, can God keep the awful majesty of His truth and justice entire in the sight of His adversaries, if Satan and the angels of wickedness along with him shall have it in their power to say—we prevailed on man to insult Him by sin, and have compelled God to put up with the affront, and to connive at it?

Now, just in proportion to the weight and magnitude of the obstacle was the greatness of that strength which the Saviour put forth in the mighty work of moving it away. We have no adequate conception upon this matter, and must just take our lesson from revelation about it;—and whether we take the prophecies which foretold the work of our Redeemer, or the history which relates it, or the doctrine which expatiates on its worth and its efficacy—all go to establish that there was the operation of a power—that there was the severity of a conflict—that there was the high emprise of an arduous and mighty warfare—that there were all the throes and all the exertions of a struggling, and at length a prevailing energy in the execution of that work which our Saviour had to do—that He had a barrier to surmount, and that, too, with the cries and the pains and the sorrows of heavy suffering and labor—that a mighty obstacle lay before Him, and He, in the business of removing it, had to travel in all the greatness of the faculties which belonged to Him—that there was a burden laid upon His shoulders, which by no one else but the Prince of Peace could have been borne—that there was a task put into His hand which none but He could fulfill. And had

the question ever been reasoned throughout the hosts of paradise, Who can so bend the unchangeable attributes of God, who can give them a shift so wonderful, that the sinners who have insulted Him may be taken into forgiveness, and His honor be kept untainted and entire?—there is not one of the mighty throng who would not have shrunk from an enterprise so lofty. There is not one of them who could at once magnify the law and release man from its violated sanctions. There is not one of them who could turn its threatening away from us, and at the same time give to the truth and the justice of God their brightest manifestation. There is not one of them who could unravel the mystery of our redemption through all the difficulties which beset and which surround it. There is not one of them who, by the strength of his arm, could have obtained the conquest over these difficulties. And however little we may enter into the elements of this weighty speculation, let us forget not that the question was not merely between God and man—it was between God and all the creatures He had formed. They saw the dilemma; they felt how deeply it involved the character of the Deity; they perceived its every bearing on the majesty of His attributes, and on the stability of the government that was upheld by Him. With them it was a matter of deep and most substantial interest; and when the Eternal Son stepped forward to carry the undertaking to its end, the feeling amongst them all was that a battle behoved to be fought, and that the strength of this mighty Captain of our salvation was alone equal to the achievement of the victory.

"Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in His apparel, traveling in the greatness of His strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save. Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the wine-fat? I have trodden the wine-press alone; and of the people there was none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I

will stain all my raiment. For the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come. And I looked, and there was none to help; and I wondered that there was none to uphold; therefore mine own arm brought salvation unto me; and my fury, it upheld me."

A way of redemption has been found out in the unsearchable riches of divine wisdom, and Christ is called the wisdom of God. But the same Christ is also called the power of God. In the mighty work of redemption He put forth a strength, and it is that strength that we are called to take hold upon. There was a wonderful strength in bearing the wrath which would have fallen on the millions and millions more of a guilty world. There was a strength which bore Him up under the agonies of the garden. There was a strength which supported Him under the hidings of His Father's countenance. There was a strength which upheld Him in the dark hour of the travail of His soul, and which one might think had well-nigh given way when He called out, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" There was a strength which carried Him in triumph through the contest over Satan when he buffeted Him with his temptations; and a strength far greater than we know of in that mysterious struggle which He held with the powers of darkness, when Satan fell like lightning from heaven, and the Captain of our salvation spoiled principalities and powers, and made a show of them openly, and triumphed over them. There was a strength in overcoming all the mighty difficulties which lay in the way between the sinner and God, in unbarring the gates of acceptance to a guilty world, in bringing truth and mercy to meet, and righteousness and peace to enter into fellowship—so that God might be just, while He is the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus.

So much for the strength which is put forth in the work of man's redemption. But there is also a strength put forth in the work of man's regeneration. Christ hath not only done a great work for us in making good our reconciliation with God—He further does a great work in us

when He makes us like unto God. But I have not time to dwell upon this last topic, and must content myself with referring you to the following Scriptures—Eph. i. 19; ii. 10; Phil. iv. 13; 2 Cor. xii. 9, 10; John xv. 5. The power which raised Jesus from the dead is the power which raises us from our death in trespasses and sins. The power that was put forth on creation is the power that makes us new creatures in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Neither have I time to make out a full demonstration of what is meant by laying hold of that strength. When you apply to a friend for some service, some relief from distress or difficulty, you may be said to lay hold of him; and when you place firm reliance both on his ability and willingness to do the service, you may well say that your hold is upon your friend—an expression which becomes all the more appropriate should he promise to do the needful good office, in which case your hold is not upon his power only, but upon his faithfulness. And it is even so with the promises of God in Christ Jesus—you have both a power and a promise to take hold of. If you believe that Christ is able to save to the uttermost all who come unto God through Him, and if you believe the honesty of His invitation to all who are weary and heavy-laden, that they might come unto Him and have rest unto their souls, thus judging Him to be faithful who has promised, then indeed will you lay hold of Christ as the power of God unto salvation, and according to the faith which has thus led you to fix upon the Saviour so will it be done unto you. To continue in this faith is in the language of Scripture to hold fast your confidence and the rejoicing of your hope firm unto the end. Cast not away this confidence which hath great recompense of reward; or if you have not yet begun to place this confidence in the assurances of the gospel, lay hold of them now—they are addressed to each and to all of you. It is not a vague generality of which I am speaking. Let every man amongst you take up with Christ, and trust in Him for yourself.

I am well aware that unless the Spirit reveal to you, all

I have said about Him will fall fruitless upon your ears, and your hearts will remain as cold and as heavy and as alienated as ever. Faith is His gift, and it is not of ourselves. But the minister is at his post when he puts the truth before you; and you are at your posts when you hearken diligently, and have a prayerful spirit of dependence on the Giver of all wisdom—that He will bless the word spoken, and make it reach your souls in the form of a salutary and convincing application. And it is indeed wonderful—it is passing wonderful, that there should be about us such an ungenerous suspicion of our Father who is in heaven. It cannot be sufficiently wondered at that all the ways in which He sets Himself forth to us should have so feeble an influence in the way of cheering us on to a more delighted confidence. How shall we account for it—that the barrier of unbelief should stand so obstinately firm in spite of every attempt and every remonstrance—that the straitening should still continue—not the straitening of God towards us, for He has said everything to woo us to put our trust in Him—but the straitening of us towards God, whereby in the face of His every kind and exhilarating declaration we persist in being cold and distant and afraid of Him.

I know not, my brethren, in how far I may have succeeded, as an humble and unworthy instrument, in drawing aside the vail which darkens the face of Him who sitteth on the throne. But oh, how imposing is the attitude, and how altogether affecting is the argument with which He comes forward to us in the text of this day! It is not so much His saying that there is no fury in Him—this He often tells us in other passages of Scripture; but the striking peculiarity of the words now submitted to us is the way in which He would convince us how little interest He can have in our destruction, and how far it is from His thoughts to aspire after the glory of such an achievement, as if He had said—it would be nothing to me to consume you all by the breath of my indignation—it would throw no illustration over me to sweep away the whole strength

of that rebellion which you have mustered up against me—it would make no more to my glory than if I went through the thorns and briers and burned them before me. This is not the battle I want to engage in—this is not the victory by which I seek to signalize myself; and you mistake me—you mistake me, ye feeble children of men, if you think that I aspire after anything else with any one of you than that you should be prevailed on to come into my vineyard, and lay hold of my strength, and seek to make peace with me, and you shall make peace with me. The victory that my heart is set upon is not a victory over your persons—that is a victory that will easily be gotten in the great day of final reckoning over all who have refused my overtures, and would none of my reproof, and have turned them away from my beseeching offers of reconciliation. In that great day of the power of mine anger it will be seen how easy it is to accomplish such a victory as this—how rapidly the fire of my conflagration will involve the rebels who have opposed me in that devouring flame from which they never, never can be extricated—how speedily the execution of the condemning sentence will run through the multitude who stand at the left hand of the avenging judge; and rest assured, ye men who are now hearing me, and whom I freely invite all to enter into the vineyard of God, that this is not the triumph that God is longing after. It is not a victory over your persons then of which He is at all ambitious—it is a victory over your wills now—it is that you do honor to His testimony by placing your reliance on it—it is that you accept of His kind and free assurances that He has no ill-will to you—it is that you cast the whole burden of sullen fear and suspicion away from your hearts, and that now, even now, you enter into a fellowship of peace with the God whom you have offended. Oh! be prevailed upon. I know that terror will not subdue you; I know that all the threatenings of the law will not reclaim you; I know that no direct process of pressing home the claims of God upon your obedience will ever compel you to the only obedience that is of any value in His estimation

—even the willing obedience of the affections to a father whom you love. But surely when He puts on in your sight the countenance of a Father—when He speaks to you with the tenderness of a Father—when He tries to woo you back to that house of His from which you have wandered, and to persuade you of His good-will, descends so far as to reason the matter, and to tell you that He is no more seeking any glory from your destruction than He would seek glory from lighting into a blaze the thorns and the briers, and burning them together—ah! my brethren, should it not look plain to the eye of faith how honest and sincere the God of your redemption is, who is thus bowing Himself down to the mention of such an argument! Do lay hold of it, and be impressed by it, and cherish no longer any doubt of the good-will of the Lord God, merciful and gracious; and let your faith work by love to Him who hath done so much and said so much to engage it, and let this love evince all the power of a commanding principle within you, by urging your every footstep to the new obedience of new creatures in Jesus Christ your Lord.

Thus the twofold benefit of the gospel will be realized by all who believe and obey that gospel. Reconciled to God by the death of His Son, regenerated by the power of that mighty and all-subduing Spirit who is at the giving of the Son, your salvation will be complete—washed, and sanctified, and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.

SERMON XXXI.

[Dr. Duff was a favorite student of Dr. Chalmers at St. Andrews. On his nomination as the first missionary sent by the Established Church of Scotland to India, Dr. Chalmers was appointed by the Presbytery of Edinburgh to preach and preside at the ordination on the 12th of August 1829, in St. George's Church. Dr. Duff revisited Scotland in 1835, and having recruited his health, and kindled over all the country a new zeal for the missionary cause, he returned to Calcutta in 1839. The following discourse was delivered in St. George's Church on the 10th of October in that year.]

PSALM XLVIII. 8.

"As we have heard, so have we seen in the city of the Lord of hosts, in the city of our God: God will establish it for ever."

When a matter is only heard by us we may or may not believe, according to our impression of the testimony; but when seen as well as heard, all unbelief is at an end. In another passage of the Psalms we read—"glorious things are said of thee, O Zion." At this stage these things may still be the objects of distrust, or at best of a dim and dubious faith. But when what is said to us is also seen by us, unbelief can no longer stand its ground against such a verification. When it comes to this—"That as we have heard, so have we seen in the city of our God,"—when, in the language of Job, we might say thereof, "I have heard of Thee with the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth Thee," all incredulity or doubt must give way before such a manifestation, and what before was doubted or even disbelieved may thus become a thing of fixed and absolute certainty.

Now what was true of the visible and earthly Jerusalem may still be true of the heavenly. In regard to the latter the same progress, though not by the very same steps from darkness to light, from doubt to certainty, may be traveled

under our Christian economy, that was frequently experienced in regard to the former under the Jewish economy. The heavenly and enduring realities wherewith we have to do are first heard by the hearing of the ear in the word of the gospel, and may afterward be seen, if not with the eye of the senses at least with the eye of the understanding, when that gospel is made to come to us not in word only but in power. When we thus liken the mental to the ocular demonstration, we may be charged with speaking figuratively, or as some may think mystically; but we make use of no other figure than that which the psalmist does when he prays the Father of lights that he might "open his eyes to behold the wondrous things contained in the law," or than that which the greatest of the apostles does when he prays in behalf of his disciples, that "the eyes of their understandings might be enlightened." Whether in reference to the earthly Jerusalem, the things of which were afar from the Hebrews who lived in the provinces, or in reference to the heavenly Jerusalem, the things of which are above us all who are still but pilgrims and sojourners in this world, in reference to both there is a way in which they may be advanced from things of hearsay to things of perception. The former, that is, the Hebrews, might at any time see the things of their Jerusalem in journeying thitherward, and viewing them with the eye of external observation. But even metaphysicians as well as inspired men tell us of the faculty of inward observation. Writers in science speak to us of conscience and of consciousness, and writers in Scripture speak of the manifestation of the truth to the conscience—such a manifestation as is competent both to the barbarian and the Greek, to the wise and to the unwise; and in virtue of which even an unlettered peasant may be translated out of darkness into marvelous light—may confidently and warrantably say, "I was once blind, but now I see."

It is now a little more than ten years ago, being in August, 1829, that in the work of setting you apart to the office of a Christian missionary, I expatiated as fully as I

could within the limits of a single address on the nature and evidence of this peculiar manifestation. I can only now state the evidence, but without enlarging on the explanation of it. The Spirit of God must interpose ere an effectual cognizance can be taken of it by men. He in the first instance can remove the vail from the heart, and make the consciousness of him on whom he operates more alive than any light of nature can, to the sinfulness and defects and the wretched infirmities of his own character. He in the second instance can remove the vail from Scripture, and make the conscience of him on whom he operates more alive than any light of nature can, to the dread authority of the law, to the sacredness and majesty of the great Lawgiver. When such materials as these are thus brought within his reach, the sense of guilt and of danger which is thereby awakened not only begets the desire of relief, but prompts the inquiries and the aspirations of moral earnestness; and the same Spirit who by the light which He casts on the tablet of the human character, led him to behold the virulence of that moral disease under which he labors, also by the light which He casts on the tablet of the outward revelation, leads him to behold the sufficient and altogether suitable remedy provided for it in the gospel. It is this adaptation of the objective Bible to the fears and the disorders and the felt wants of the subjective human nature which leads the converts of the present day to conclude from the writings, what the converts of the first age concluded from the words of the apostle—"These men tell us all that is in our hearts, and verily God is in them of a truth." It is not less a matter of rational evidence that the heavenly Physician had to operate on the mind and enable it to see the before hidden things of its own state and the things of Scripture, than it is a matter of ocular evidence to the man who has been relieved of a cataract that the earthly physician had to operate on his body and enable him to see the things of external nature. There is no more of fancy or fanaticism in the one case than the other. The argument is the same in kind, though far more intense in

the feeling of it, with that argument in natural theology which serves to establish that the world of nature came from the hand of a God because of its numerous subserviencies to the physical wants of man. In like manner do we reason that the word of Scripture has come to us from the hands of God, because of its no less striking adaptations and subserviencies to the properties and wants, and so to the wellbeing of man's moral constitution. It affects not the character of the argument while it adds prodigiously to its impression and its strength, that our first sight of its promises is given us in answer to prayer or by the operation of the Spirit from above. In the face of contempt and obloquy do we affirm of this argument, this manifestation of the truth to the conscience, and in virtue of which the gospel is ushered into the heart of man with power, and with the Holy Ghost and with much assurance, that derided as it may have been in the halls of literature, where plebeian Christianity if noticed at all is spoken of in contumely and scorn, the argument is both as firm in its basis, and as logical in the whole of its structure and effect, as any reasoning in moral or mental science propounded from the chair of philosophy in all the forms and with all the confidence of academic demonstration.

It must be on some such evidence that the philosophy of missions is based. We send forth the heralds of salvation, but we can not invest them with the power of working miracles as the badge of their apostleship. Whatever the persuasive influences may be which they carry along with them, it must be in the words which they utter and not in the works which they perform. The credentials of their message must be somehow bound up in the substance of the message itself, for we can not now say, as did the first teachers of Christianity, Verily, the signs of an embassy from heaven have been wrought amongst you in signs and wonders and mighty deeds; but in the absence of these accompaniments, external to the message, and which they could appeal to in other days as vouchers for its credibility, there may still be the same credibility in the

very things of the message itself, which from the beginning has been applied to them. By one faculty they might hear the message, and by another faculty, as that of seeing, they can be made to perceive the truth of its subject-matter, and to say—As we heard, so have we seen—then may it be understood how, without a sensible miracle, there may arise in the mind a well-founded belief in the truth of Christianity. Now this is precisely what happens in the great majority, we should rather say in all the instances of conversion, whether in or out of Christendom. What is received by one faculty, by the hearing of the ear, is recognized by another, not by the seeing with the eye of the outer, but by the seeing with the eye of the inner man. After that the Spirit of God has made palpable to the exercised conscience of the inquirer the disease of humanity, and has made alike palpable the adaptations profoundly skillful and pregnant with the most satisfactory evidence of that counterpart remedy which is provided for it in the gospel—it is thus that without miracle, with no other operation than that of preaching the word and praying for the Spirit to give it efficacy, and by no other apparatus than the simple apparatus of the Bible and the conscience, may a light be struck out between them, by which things hidden from the wise and the prudent are revealed to the veriest babes in literature. It is this which makes the evidence of Christianity so accessible to every member of the human family—so portable, if I may use the expression, to every quarter of the globe. Thus one and the same message from heaven might well find the same acceptance everywhere, and that because of the identity of human nature all the world over. It is thus that the word of God can open for itself an avenue to the inner recesses of every soul—and discerner as it is of the thoughts and intents of the heart, can work a deeply seated conviction there of its own truth, and its own authority. It is the key which unlocks every bosom, and by its universal adaptation to the universal state and character of humanity, it is fitted to establish its own moral supremacy in every territory where men are to be found. The

children of this world may denounce and may deride as mystical that light which is to lighten all nations, that evidence which is to Christianize all people. But, blessed be God, that self-evidencing power of the truth, which is the laughing stock of many adversaries, is more and more a thing now of experimental verification. Without it we should be powerless abroad, and there would be fanaticism and folly in the enterprise of missionaries; but without it we should be alike powerless and inefficient at home, and there would be the very same fanaticism and folly in the ordinary ministrations of our own clergymen, the Sabbath services of our own land. And therefore, blessed be God, that we can now lift our appeal to the facts and findings of every-day experience. In the name of those daily conversions which are now taking place in the wilds of Paganism—in the name of those glorious revivals which are now taking place within the limits of our own Church and country, do we affirm the equal significancy and equal power of manifestation in both, so that when speaking of the Holy Ghost and the efficacy of his demonstration on the consciences of men, we only speak the things of actual and historical fulfillment, we are but speaking the words of truth and of soberness.

To be fully accomplished for the work of a missionary one would need to conjoin two things which are often to be found in a state of separation from each other, and not so often realized together in the character and person of one and the same individual. The first is that wisdom which in the regulation of all its proceedings bears a respect to the general laws of nature and lessons of experience; the second is that piety which looks for the success of its proceedings only to the special blessing of God. In virtue of the former our accomplished missionary will be as strenuous in the forthputting and exercise of his own powers as if man did all—in virtue of the latter he will be as distrustful of self, and as humbly depending on the power that is above, as if God did all. It is because of the former that he works, and it is because of the latter that he prays—a truly blessed fellowship, to which, in the history of Christianization by

human agency, the gospel of Jesus Christ is indebted for all its triumphs, from the days of Paul, who strove mightily according to the grace of God that worked in him mightily, to the days of a more recent apostleship, beginning with the missionary Eliot, who, as the fruit of his lengthened and laborious experience among the Indians of North America, left behind this most precious of recorded sayings—That through faith in Christ Jesus it was in the power of pains and of prayer to do any thing.

Every view which can be taken of the office to which ten years ago you were set apart in this place by the Presbytery of Edinburgh, points to the same conclusion. Among others, the text to which we have referred, and on which we have founded the peculiar argument of this day, affords a very clear and palpable illustration of it. The message of the gospel must first be received by the hearing of the bodily ear, for "how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard?" And this message of the gospel must, secondly, be recognized as true by the seeing of the mental eye—by that faith which is not of ourselves, but is the gift of God. For the fulfillment of the first of these objects you have put forth an industry, and let me add, a sagacity, both alike evincing the important share which the natural faculties of man have in the business of a missionary. By a device of admirable skillfulness and correspondent success, you have brought many of the most influential families of Hindostan within reach of the hearing of the word of God. You have instituted a school mainly of scriptural lessons and scriptural exercises. You have practiced no deceit upon the natives, for all is above boards, and it is universally known that the volume which forms the great text and substratum of your scholarship, is the book of the religion of the Christians. But you, at the same time, have studied to multiply the attractions of this school—you have not only instituted a lectureship on the evidences of Christianity, but, for the purpose of engaging the attendance chiefly of the higher classes, you have pressed into the service both the physical and the mathematical

sciences, and what might startle some, have superadded the doctrines of political economy—and all that the votaries of science might be lured within the precincts of sacredness. It is thus that the youth of India of all ranks, and especially of the upper orders of society, have passed through your seminary in successive hundreds, familiarized with the language and seasoned with the subject-matter of inspiration. It is thus that many have heard with the hearing of the ear, and at least been disarmed of all hostility to the gospel, and some of these many have been made to see, and been converted, and become the declared friends and champions of our faith. It delights me, sir, to know, as the fruit of my intimate converse and of my acquaintance with your principles and your thoughts, that while you have done so much to obtain an extensive hearing for the gospel of Jesus Christ in the most likely and promising quarters of human society, you are at the same time fully and feelingly aware what that high and external quarter is whence alone the seeing comes, and that unless a blessing, to be evoked only by prayer, shall descend from the sanctuary above upon your enterprise, all the labor you have bestowed upon it will prove but a vain and empty parade. Let me earnestly recommend the continuance of this sacred and fruitful union—a union between the diligence of ever-working hands and the devotion of ever-praying hearts. Men of various moods and temperaments and different states of spirituality and intellect, will be variously affected by the spectacle. Those of shrewd, but withal of secular intelligence, will think lightly of your supplications, perhaps even speak contemptuously of those outpourings of the Spirit on which, I trust, you will ever wait and ever watch with humble expectancy. Those of serious, but withal of weak and driveling piety, will think lightly of your science, and perhaps even speak with rebuke of your geometry, and your economics, and your other themes of strange and philosophic nomenclature, as things that have in them a certain cast of heathenish innovation, prejudicial to the success, because incongruous with the simplicity of the gospel. But amid

these reproaches on the right and on the left, persevere as you have begun; and whether, on the one hand, they be the cold rationalists who assail you with their contempt, or, on the other hand, they be the fanatical religionists who look on you with intolerance, continue to do what all men of sense and of sacredness have done before, and you will at length reap the fulfillment of the saying—that wisdom is justified of her children.

Before coming to a close, I cannot but advert to that special Providence which has withdrawn you for a season from the immediate field of your missionary labors. What threatened to be a disaster has turned out a signal blessing to this Scheme of the General Assembly. It has given tenfold impulse to the cause; nor do I need to expatiate at all on the palpable fact, that by your presence and your exertions at home, you have enhanced, and fully in this proportion, the interest felt throughout Scotland in the Christianity of India. But over and above this special benefit, there is another of a still more comprehensive character, conferred by your means upon the Church, and which if rightly followed up, will tell most prosperously and productively in the advancement of all its Schemes—I allude to the advocacy you have made of your objects and views, and that not an advocacy confined to a particular spot whither all who chose might repair and listen to you, but an advocacy carried by your own personal locomotion from one part of the country to another, so that instead of waiting till the public should by a spontaneous act shake off its own apathy, you with greater wisdom, and far greater effect, went aggressively forth in making assault upon a public awakened by the urgency of your appeals out of the slumber of its before deep and hopeless indifference. This is the only way to originate an interest not yet felt, and the best way by which to perpetuate and vastly to extend it. You were the first, I believe, to set the example of thus passing from parish to parish, and from presbytery to presbytery, in behalf of your own cause, and it only needs to be so carried forward in behalf of other causes, as to fill the whole length

and breadth of the land, in order to reap a tenfold more abundant harvest from the liberalities of the people than has ever yet been realized, and to make the beloved Church of our fathers the most efficient organ of Christian beneficence which the world ever saw.

Allow me, sir, to say, as being specially connected with another great Scheme of the Church of Scotland,* that we are both alike free of those jealousies which are sometimes felt between one philanthropic society and another. They proceed, it appears to me, on a false arithmetic, or rather on a misapprehension, in virtue of which it is that the natural and what may be called the moral arithmetic, are confounded with each other. It is by the natural that you estimate the means—it is by the moral that you estimate the motives; and it is quite a possible thing that the process by which the means of benevolence are somewhat abridged, may be the very process by which a tenfold force is given to the motives of benevolence. Nothing more palpably true than that the guinea which has been parted with for some object of foreign charity, is no longer in reserve for an object of home charity. But the same application which drew the guinea from the hand, sent an impulse to the heart, insomuch that he who has been so operated upon is a more hopeful subject for a fresh application than the man whose purse has never yet been opened—and just because his sensibilities have never yet been addressed in the cause of liberality. It is true, in fact, that our two causes, our two committees, might work into each other's hands. Should the first take the precedency, and traverse for collections the whole of Scotland, the second would only find the ground more softened and prepared for an abundant produce to itself. It acts not by exhaustion—it acts by fermentation. It is preposterous to speak of exhaustion. Who exhausts himself?—who carries his charities so far as to abridge by them the general habit of his expenditure?—who does more than cast into the treasury some unmissed fraction of that fund which is familiarly

* The Church Extension Scheme.

known by the name of pocket-money?—who, after such a surrender, does not feel himself to all sense as entire as before for a new application, and only the more inured by it to the self-denial and the sacrifices of charity. Let there be two towns of equal wealth and population, the first of which has never been addressed in behalf of any philanthropic object, and the second of which is plied every fortnight for one or other of those numerous societies that are now in operation—to which of them would the patrons of some new enterprise repair with the greatest hope of success? All experience replies to the latter of them. They are mainly, in fact, the same names which recur and are prominent in all the most distinguished charities of our land. By each distinct contribution the fund of charity is doubtless somewhat impaired; but all the feelings of charity—a willingness to distribute—a readiness to communicate—these are enhanced by the exercise; and we are yet very far from the maximum to which, under the operation of these various elements, the liberalities of our population might be carried. With the slight encroachment that is made by one society on the *materiel* of benevolence, there is a quickening and an excitement given to the *morale* of it—and the other societies just speed in proportion the more that they follow in the direction of that predecessor which has opened a way for them. We are not counting on the powers of that alchemy which transmutes everything into gold—ours is a higher and nobler alchemy—the alchemy of the heart—in virtue of which the charity which in behalf of some one object is kindled there, expands at length from one object to another, till it has learned to cast a wide and a wakeful eye over all the sufferings and all the necessities of our species. They therefore who would represent our two committees as of adverse influence and operation upon each other, have never attended either to the facts or to the philosophy of the subject, and evince the same gross misunderstanding of the true mechanism of our nature that is done by those who would repress the liberality of the working-classes in behalf of Bible or missionary objects,

lest it should haste their descent to a lower level, and fill the neighborhood with pauperism. The fact is, that it widens their distance from pauperism, and translates into the moral habit and elevation of generosity those who otherwise might be degraded into that sloth or that sordidness which turn so many into receivers. It is on these grounds that I would have the two committees to join hand in hand, and to act in perfect fearlessness and perfect friendship the one with the other. The success of the first will be the best security or guarantee for the success of the second—they will grow with each other's growth—they will strengthen with each other's strength.

But I ought to apologize for expatiating on this topic so long, while you, sir, are standing before me. It is for the purpose of expressing my hope, that under the inspiration of that principle which under God you have done so much to awaken, both the prayers and the liberalities of this your native land will follow you where you are going. I confidently feel that I am but the organ for the expressing of the collective and unanimous mind of this congregation, when I say that their prayers and their wishes go along with you. In the language of Paul to his converts, we would commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you and all your spiritual children an inheritance among them which are sanctified. It is not for us to lift that vail which overhangs the secrets of futurity, or with prophetic inspiration to utter these words of the apostle for which His disciples sorrowed most of all—that we shall see your face no more. To God alone is reserved the knowledge of the times and of the seasons, and to us belongs a solemn sense of the uncertainty of these things. Enough for us that we know our present duty, and the certainty of their future heaven to every faithful disciple of the Lord Jesus; yet without presumption, I trust, may we give utterance to the impression that is upon our spirits, of the aspect—the singularly prophetic aspect, not merely of the days in which we live, but both of Christendom, that region you are about to leave,

and of Eastern Asia, that region of ancient idolatry whither you are going; for we can notice on that distant horizon the faint breakings of evangelical light, which, like the dawn of early morn, may perhaps increase more and more till the drying up of the Euphrates, that the way of the kings of the East may be prepared. And here, in strong and immediate manifestation, do we see the heavings of a general and wayward restlessness till all the ancient kingdoms of authority have been loosened—and perhaps through a midway passage of desolations and judgments, the kingdoms of this world are soon to become the kingdoms of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. But we shall enter no further on these topics of yet unfulfilled prophecy, or attempt to grope our way through not a total, but a twilight darkness—a darkness visible over the perspective which lies before us. Duties are ours—events are God's; and while we meddle not with the matters too high for us—with the secret things which belong to Him, let us ever bear in mind, that one of the most clearly revealed things which belong to us and to our children, is to preach the gospel to every creature under heaven. God grant that each of us in his own proper vocation may be found faithful in that day, giving full proof of his ministry; and whether in churches at home or by missionaries abroad, may both you and we have grace to acquit ourselves as faithful laborers throughout this seed-time of the earth's coming regeneration, in the full development of which it is that the cross of Christ shall behold the consummation of its triumphs.

SERMON XXXII.

["I HAD the high satisfaction," says Dr. Merle d'Aubigné, in his work entitled "Germany, England, and Scotland," "of hearing Dr. Chalmers. You know that he was minister of Glasgow, first in the Tron Church, and afterwards in St. John's. Dr. Brown, his friend and successor in the latter church, having left the Establishment in 1843, his people built him a Free Church, in which they studiously endeavored to give the architecture a certain style of elegance, in order, no doubt, to show what can be done in our own day by the free contributions of Christians. The steeple, tower, and façade of this church make it one of the finest in Scotland. I will not here repeat passages of the sermon; I have already spoken of Chalmers, and besides, some of his discourses, translated into French by Professor Diodati, one of the best preachers of Geneva, are known to every body. But what I would say is, that it was the last time that Chalmers preached in Glasgow, where he had first begun to be known to the Christian world. You can imagine the desire felt in that city to hear him—the crowds that gathered from all quarters; but you can have no idea of the order and the devotion of the assembly. The collection on leaving the church amounted to 40,000 francs—£1600—for the morning service only. There was another in the afternoon, and one in the evening." The sermon which follows was the one thus alluded to—preached at the opening of Free St. John's, Glasgow, on June 8, 1845. The whole sum contributed on that occasion at the different services amounted to £1778, 14s. 11¼d.]

MARK IV. 24. LUKE VIII. 18.

"Take heed what ye hear." "Take heed therefore how ye hear."

THE mightiest effects are ascribed to hearing in Scripture. That little organ, the human ear, is spoken of as the duct or pathway by which the richest blessings whereof humanity is capable are conveyed to the soul. In one place we read of it as the channel by which faith enters—"Faith cometh by hearing;" and it is "by faith that we are saved." In another, that our life, by which life everlasting is meant, hinges upon it—"Hear, and your soul shall live." And again, in counterpart to this, we read that—"If ye will not hear, I will send a curse upon you; I will bring your house to desolation"—all marking that somehow or other, to hear,

and to hear aright, is the channel and the great stepping-stone to those who now sit in the shadow of death, and by which they are conducted to life everlasting.

With such representations as these of the vast importance of hearing, one cannot but think, at the opening of a new church, how big, how pregnant such an event must prove either for weal or wo to hundreds—it may be thousands—of unperishable spirits, because standing, as it may, for centuries—nay, the site, perhaps, of future fabrics to the end of the world. What is to be done here may tell on the everlasting destiny not of ourselves only, but of our children's children throughout many generations. We are sometimes told of the mighty doings which go on within the walls of an exchange, where the bargains that are made from week to week, the commercial transactions which are there settled, bear on the state and fortune of whole classes of society—or within the walls of a university, where the lessons daily given are deposited in the minds of assembled youth who, in the coming age, are to fill the highest departments of public usefulness—or within the walls of a court-house, where sentences are passed by which character, and property, and life, the dearest of all earthly interests, are disposed of—or within the walls of a parliament, on whose votes and decisions hang the fate of nations, and those great events which figure on the arena of this world's large and visible history. But to a man of larger vision, who has an eye and a comprehension for things still larger than these, all that we have now spoken of is eclipsed and cast into the shade by the might and the magnificence of those doings which take place within the walls of a church, and which concern a far sublimer history than that of nations, even the history of souls subsisting in immortal vigor after all the empires of earth shall have fallen; and on the high scale and reckoning of eternity, the annals of our entire species, from the creation of Adam to the day of judgment, shall appear like a tale that is told, or but a brief evolution in the progress of an administration that never ends. They are words of eternal

life which are spoken here; and on your reception of these words it depends whether that life is to be laid hold of, or that life of blessedness and glory is to be for ever forfeited. They are the seeds of an unfading vegetation which are falling abroad and being scattered here; and it will depend on the soil of your own hearts whether they shall germinate into the briers and thorns whose end is to be burned, or into trees of righteousness, to be afterwards transplanted into the Paradise of God. But human hearts are reached through the medium of human ears; and it is on the question of how you hear, that there hinges the mighty difference between a wretched and a glorious eternity. God seeth not as man seeth, and they estimate things in heaven in another way than we do on earth; and so this fabric, which rises in such graceful elevation before the sight of admiring passengers, bears to the spiritual eye a far deeper interest in its future history than it does to the natural eye in its present aspect. By the one estimate we pronounce on what is manifest to all—the tastefulness and beauty of the edifice in which we are now assembled; by the other estimate we pronounce on things of mightier import, though not to be evolved till the day shall declare them, when the Lord writeth up the people, and will count of this man and that man that he was born there. The outgoings of this place are to eternity; and the angels above are fastening their regards on it as they would on a nursery of immortals, who may yet company with themselves in their everlasting habitations. And oh, it is affecting to think, that within these four corners, and on this limited platform before me, an operation may from Sabbath to Sabbath be going on in human bosoms, subtle and unseen, it may be, but charged with results of which heaven and hell will attest the magnitude and the endurance, long after this earth is burned up, and these heavens have passed away. The word of the gospel sounded forth here will, let us hope, be to many the savor of life unto life, and to some, we fear—oh! that we could warrantably say, not to many, or to any—will it be the savor of death unto death.

But this big alternative will at once convince us, that it is not every sort of hearing that will serve the purpose—a lesson strongly and impressively set forth in the parable of the sower. It is only by hearing in a certain way that we come to a saving knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus. And indeed the same holds of all other sciences and all other subjects, as well as Christianity—in the things of human as well as in the things of divine learning—in the lessons of natural knowledge as well as in the lessons of religion. I should like you to consider wherein it is that those two great branches of mental acquisition and improvement agree, and thus that you may be all the better prepared to understand wherein, also, it is that they differ. To master any part of common or literary education, you must often listen to the instructions of a teacher; but it is not every kind of hearing that will avail you—you must hear with an earnest desire after knowledge. And so it is in religion; for we read in the Bible that we must give earnest heed to the things which we have heard, and desire the sincere milk of the word. And you must hear with attention—but so also is it in religion, for in the Bible we read, and that repeatedly, that we must attend to the words of instruction. And we must be diligent in hearing; but as in common scholarship, so in the scholarship by which we become wise unto salvation; for we further read, that if we hearken diligently to the Lord, He will cause us to behold that which is good, and our soul shall delight itself in fatness,—all marking, therefore, a similarity in the methods by which we come to the understanding and knowledge of natural things, and to that knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ which is life everlasting. In both these departments, then, the human mind is put upon a like busy and strenuous exercise of its faculties—the faculty of earnest desirousness, the faculty of attention, the habits and the faculties of unwearied industry. The pursuits and the processes by which we arrive at a natural knowledge of the things which concern us here, are in all these respects at one with the pursuits and processes by which we arrive at the spiritual and the sav-

ing knowledge of the things which belong to our everlasting peace, or to the good of our eternity. But along with this there is one most important respect in which they differ, and we feel an explanation of that difference to be necessary ere we can found upon it our special directions for taking heed how you hear.

But before explaining this difference, let me again state—and I cannot do it too clearly or too earnestly—that though something more is necessary for the scholarship of Christianity than for the scholarship of human learning, yet there should be the same busy application of natural methods and of the natural faculties when engaged with the prosecution of both. Whatever the something may be which is needed for religious, and which is not needed for other and ordinary knowledge, it is nothing which ought to supersede your utmost desire, your utmost attention, and the utmost forthputting of all your intellectual powers, whether of memory, or of apprehension, or of rational inference, or of the common mental efforts by which you arrive at the understanding of anything else, and which you should just put forward in like manner when you are laboring to understand the doctrine of God as revealed in the Old and New Testaments. Whatever more is necessary for the right discernment of these, it is not intended to set aside the natural powers of the mind, but, in fact, it stimulates and gives effect to the exertion of them. If you want to become wise in the contents of the Bible, deal with it as you would with any other book whose contents you wanted to master and thoroughly understand—read it diligently—read it heedfully—read it with the strenuous exercise of all the intelligent and discerning powers of the mind—compare passage with passage, and address yourself to this work of divine authorship just as you would to a work of human authorship. It is true that there is a distinction between the two, but not such a distinction as should obliterate the samenesses or similarities of treatment which I have now insisted on. Take this along with you, I entreat; and then may I, with all the greater safety, make known to you what that distinction is.

The distinction is this:—You can become a proficient in the things of natural religion, by dint of the natural faculties, and of these alone. To become a proficient in the knowledge of things spiritual and divine, you must still put forth, and that on their most strenuous and busy exercise, your natural faculties, but you will never come to the knowledge of these other and higher things—that is, never to the knowledge of them savingly and spiritually—by these alone. You must ply, and that with all perseverance and all diligence, your powers of attention and understanding, both in the hearing and the reading of the Scriptures; but still you will not succeed unless the Spirit of God come down from on high, and open your understanding to understand the Scriptures. This is the great peculiarity which appertains to the Bible, and to no other book in the world. When it is a book of mere human performance, then by the mere unaided exercise of my own human powers I can master all that is in it—and after, say two or three perusals, I may get possession of the whole mind and meaning of its author, and have nothing more to learn from him. It is not so with the Bible. The Spirit of God is there speaking to me, for it is He who dictated the whole of that volume, insomuch that every word and every sentence of it is the produce of His inspiration. But for me to read it with right and saving discernment, the Spirit of God must not only speak to me, He must also work in me—so that not only does He hold forth to me a light from without, even that word of God whereof He is the alone author, but He must also clear up my faculty of vision within, and so open my eyes as to behold the wondrous things which are contained therein. It is thus that by means of this peculiarity which signalizes the Bible, which separates and sets it apart from all the works of human authorship—it is thus that this great work, this word of God, makes proof of its high original, its descent from heaven to all those who, enlightened from on high, are enabled to read or to hear it, not with natural only, but with spiritual discernment. We have already said, that whatever man can write or man

can speak, man also, perhaps at one or two readings, or at one or two hearings, can fully understand. But when God writes, as He has done in the Bible, or when God speaks, as He does by the mouth of those who are the expounders of the Bible, then taking up its own language, we may say, Who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been His counselor, unless by the help of that Spirit who alone searcheth all things, even the deep things of God? It is thus that without the Spirit the Bible is a sealed book to us, while with the Spirit, its otherwise hidden and unsearchable things come forth in open manifestation; for as an evidence of its divine property, and so of its divine original, while human compositions can tell us no more after two or three perusals,—in behalf of this divine composition we appeal to the aged Christian peasant, who has read his Bible a hundred times over, whether, as he is now reading, some new light and new lesson have not evolved themselves so as to refresh and satisfy his soul, as if the Spirit at every new time made some new and additional disclosure from the contents of the book, the truths and the treasures of which are inexhaustible—insomuch that to the end of his days it proves to him a mine of endless wealth, from which he is ever getting more, the more he explores and the more he digs in it, so that every day he finds in it a greater fullness of meaning than before, and every day is more satisfied with its richness.

Before proceeding to found any directions on this important peculiarity by which the things of Scripture stand distinguished from all the things of mere natural knowledge or of mere human authorship, I should like to present you with an illustration of the difference between a natural and a spiritual discernment of the very same truth, though time is passing on, and I must therefore confine myself to give one instance as an example of all the rest.

We have not to travel out of the record for the purpose of having this truth made known to us—that God is everywhere present. It meets the observation of the natural man in his reading of the Bible; and he understands, or

thinks he understands, the terms on which it is delivered; and he can speak of it with consistency; and he ranks it with the other attributes of God; and he gives it an avowal and a formal admission among the articles of his creed—and yet, with all this parade of light and of knowledge, he, upon the subject of the all-seeing and the ever-present Deity, labors under all the obstinacy of an habitual blindness. Carry him abroad, and you will find that the light which beams upon his senses from the objects of sight completely overpowers that light which ought to beam upon his spirit from this object of faith. He may occasionally think of it as he does of other things; but for every one practical purpose, the thought abandons him so soon as he goes into company, or takes a part in the next worldly concern, which in the course of his business comes round to him. It completely disappears as an element of conduct, and he talks and thinks and reasons just as he would have done had his mind in reference to God been in a state of entire darkness. If anything like a right conception of the matter ever existed in his heart, the din and the daylight of the world drive it all away from him. Now, to rectify this case, it is surely not necessary that the Spirit add anything to the truth of God's omnipresence as it is put down in the written record: it will be enough that He gives to the mind on which he operates a steady and enduring impression of this truth. Now, this is one part of His office; and accordingly it is said of the unction of the Spirit, that it is an unction which remaineth. Neither is it necessary that the light which He communicates should consist in any vision which He gives to the eye, or in any bright impression upon the fancy, of any one thing not to be found within the pages of the Bible: it will be enough if He give a clear and vigorous apprehension of the truth, just as it is written, to the understanding. Though the Spirit should do no more than give vivacity and effect to the truth of the constancy of God's presence, just as it stands in the written record, this will be quite enough to make the man who is under its influence carry an habitual sense of God about

with him—think of Him in the shop and in the market-place—walk with Him all the day long, and feel the same moral restraint upon his doings as if some visible superior, whose virtues he revered and whose approbation he longed after, haunted his every footstep, and kept an attentive eye fastened upon the whole course of his history. The natural man may have sense, and he may have sagacity, and a readiness withal to admit the constancy of God's presence as an undeniable doctrine of the Bible; but to the power of this truth he is dead, and it is only to the power of this world's interests and pleasures that he is alive. The spiritual man is the reverse of all this, and that without carrying his conceptions a single hairbreadth beyond the communications of the written message. He makes no pretensions to wisdom by one jot or tittle beyond the testimony of Scripture; and yet, after all, he lives under a revelation to which the other is a stranger. It does not carry him by a single footstep without the field of the written revelation, but it throws a radiance over every object within it. It furnishes him with a constant light which enables him to withstand the domineering influence of sight and of sense. He dies unto the world—he lives unto God; and the reason is that there rests upon him a peculiar manifestation by which the truth is made visible to the eye of his mind, and a peculiar energy by which it comes home upon his conscience. And if we come to inquire into the cause of this speciality, it is the language of the Bible, confirmed as we believe it to be by the soundest experience, that every power which nature has conferred upon man, exalted to its highest measure, and called forth to its most strenuous exercise, is not able to accomplish it; that it is due to a power above nature and beyond it; that it is due to what the apostle calls the demonstration of the Spirit—a demonstration withheld from the self-sufficient exertions of man, and given to his believing prayers.

Now take this as a specimen of what holds in regard to all the other doctrines and truths of our holy religion. There is a certain understanding of them which the natural

man has, but this is very different from the spiritual and practical discernment of them which he alone can have who has been taught of God, or come under the teaching of the Holy Ghost—a teaching, however, I would have you well to observe, not by which you are informed of things that are not in this book, but only a teaching which impresses the truths of Scripture clearly and effectively, and with operative power on the mind of him who reads the Bible as he ought, or who hears an expounder of the Bible as he ought. The natural man may read with some degree of interest and intelligence, and may hear with still greater; but what more palpable than the wholesale phenomenon presented not by individuals only, but by the great bulk and body of many a congregation, who will listen, and perhaps be impressed for a time, and think they understand the preacher—nay, perhaps do honestly admire him, and yet are not converted by him?

This is a matter in which sound experience and sound theology are most palpably at one. There is no withstanding of the fact. The people can be brought in full assemblage together, and that not merely on the impulse of an occasion, but Sabbath after Sabbath might the church be filled to the very door by a listening, nay, by a delighted—nay, by a solemnized, and for a time it may be by a deeply impressed, and, to all appearance one might think by looking at them, a thoroughly subdued multitude, over whose willing hearts truth and Scripture have obtained a decisive victory, and the voice of the preacher has not only charmed the ears, but positively carried the feelings and purposes of an obedient people. These demonstrations of sin—these offers of a large and a free salvation—seem as if they had told at the moment of their utterance, and that the work of the pulpit was going on most prosperously. And there is the oratory of the pulpit just as there is the oratory of the platform, and of the bar, and of the senate-house—and the music of the one may regale and elevate just as the other does; but when the question comes, how is it that we have the blossom of so many promises, and

withal the sickly produce of so little fruit—what is it that so draws the people together, and yet falls short of converting them?—we have no other answer to give, than that it is but a day of man's power, and not a day of God's power. The virtue so to expound as to attract may be there, but not the virtue so to enlighten as to regenerate. The influence from above is the want; and while apart from any special or extraordinary unction of this sort a man might, on the strength of nature and of its powers alone, become a skillful tradesman, or an able man of business, or an accomplished scholar in any of the arts and sciences of merely human acquirement, so as by dint of their respective lessons to become a good agriculturist, a good physician, a good astronomer—it is precisely because, however versed in the lessons of Scripture, if the Spirit of God withhold from them His efficacy, he does not and cannot become a good Christian.

Let me now found, upon the explanation we have given, a few brief practical instructions both as to how you should read the Bible, and, which substantially is the same thing, as to how you should hear him who from the pulpit expounds and enforces the lessons of the Bible. "Take heed how you hear."

First, then, although the few directions I mean to give bear all of them a special reference to the doctrine that without the Spirit of God we can never read of things sacred to any purpose, or rather although these directions are expressly founded upon that doctrine, yet, notwithstanding, it is our very first direction that you should hear diligently, or in other words, that you bring all your natural faculties, your attention, your intelligence, your memory—all the mental powers, in short, which God hath given you—that you press them into the service of a close and busy engagement, whether with the Bible when you are holding converse with its pages, or with the preacher when you are hanging upon his utterance—and this for the purpose of understanding aright, and being impressed aright, either by what you read or by what you hear. There is

nothing in the doctrine of the Spirit which supersedes the very processes in the scholarship of Christianity which are set a going and are of avail in all other scholarship. In operating upon man He does not work against his nature, but He works according to and with his nature. He does not take the work of salvation out of the man's own hands, but He strengthens and enables and rightly equips the man for working out his own salvation. It is a most mischievous abuse of our doctrine, that because the Spirit does all, man has nothing to do, and so might fold his arms and forbear the exertion of all his faculties, for in truth it is by the man's faculties, and through his faculties, that the Spirit does anything. The effect of His working in us is to set us a working. When He intromits with man, it is not to violate the laws of his constitution; it is not to derange the machinery either of his moral or intellectual nature, but to set that machinery rightly and prosperously a going. So far from setting aside human instrumentality, He has the greatest value for it; for example, in the case of Lydia He did not Himself tell her about the things of salvation, He left that to the apostle; neither did He force these things on her acceptance without any forthputting of her own faculties, and yet He did interpose between these parties, but it was so to open the heart of Lydia that she attended to the things that were spoken of Paul. And so also in the case of Peter and Cornelius: He neither took from the one his office as a preacher, nor from the other his powers and duties as a hearer; both were at their right post: the former earnestly charging and explaining, the other as earnestly and diligently listening, and it was when thus severally employed, and not till then, that the Holy Ghost fell on all them who heard; and accordingly we are bidden to take heed to the word of the prophecy, and persevere in the exercise till the day dawn and the day-star arise in our hearts. There never was a more glaring perversion, by a sadly misplaced and a sadly misunderstood orthodoxy, than that because the Spirit does all, man is to do nothing. It is a most blessed truth that the Spirit is given because His

aid is indispensable, still He is thus given not to prevent our diligence, but to prompt our diligence, and to set it a going; or, if He find you already diligent, still He is given not to stop that diligence, but to make it effectual. Whether, then, in the way of stirring up the gift that is in you, or for the purpose of bringing down that gift upon you, in the full view of the Spirit and with special reference to His agency for giving effect to your attendance on the means of grace, it is my first direction to one and to all, that in taking heed how you hear, you shall hear diligently.

And then, as a direct preparative for the descent of this blessed influence from on high, it is my second direction—That you shall hear desirously. But desirously for what? There is a great running after ministers in this our day, and this argues a great desire of something or other; but we again put the question—desire of what? Is it to be regaled by the eloquence of the preacher?—is it because you are lured by the report of his high and his far-sounding popularity?—is it because you want a feast for your imagination, or your intellect, or any of your sensibilities, such as you might have when listening to the oratory of the bar, or to the oratory of the senate-house, or even to the idle declamations of the theater? That is not a desirousness which will help you forward, but rather prove an impediment in the way of your salvation. What I want is the desirousness of the conscience-stricken sinner, earnestly longing to be right with God; it is the simple and serious desire to become wise unto salvation; it is a deep-felt desire for the good of your souls, grounded on the deep sense of their exceeding worthlessness, and yet of the exceeding worth and magnitude of their eternity. The men who can minister best—not to the taste, not to the curiosity, not to the passion for excitement—but who can minister best to the urgent necessities and demands of the conscience, these are the men we should like to see run after—men, it may be, not of gifts, but of graces, faithful stewards of the mysteries of God, being themselves men of faith and of prayer, who can best feed the people with the bread of

life, because inclined and enabled by their Master to feed them with both knowledge and spiritual understanding. Let yours be a desire for the sincere milk of the word, that you may grow thereby—let yours be a real hungering and thirsting after righteousness, and yours will be the desirousness we mean when, in giving you our second direction as to how you should hear, we tell you to hear desirously.

Our third direction is—Hear with special application to yourself as far as you are warranted to do so by the language of Scripture.—And the language of Scripture does warrant such a specific application throughout a very wide range indeed both of its statements and calls. Who, for example, can refuse the warrant when the Bible makes use of a term so unexcepted, so universal, as "every one?"—"Cursed is every one who continueth not in all the words of the law to do them." Here is a passage which carries a sentence of condemnation throughout one and all of the human family; but this very term is the harbinger of other tidings than those of doom and of dismay—"Every one that asketh receiveth." Here then is a message of reconciliation to one and all of the human family, who, in other ways, too, and under other forms of expression, are called to cast themselves in dependence and prayer on that God who sets Himself forth as God in Christ, and holds out the scepter of a free and gracious invitation to every sinner within the call of the gospel. Hear as for yourself, then, the voice of the preacher, and thus to yourself will every utterance of his be a word of warning, or a word of encouragement, or a word of direction; you will read the Bible as if it were sent to you individually; you will hear the minister as if he were speaking to you individually. It is a simple advice that I am now rendering; but just as the natural life may be sustained on the simple aliment of air and water and the plainest of food, so it is on simple truths that the spiritual life of man is sustained; and could we only prevail on each reader or each hearer to isolate himself, and either read as if he—personally and particularly—were holding converse with God in the Bible, or hear as

if he in the same personal and particular way were holding converse with God through the minister, why, on this advice, plain and simple as it is, there may hinge the good of your eternity, and through a blessing from above on the means of grace, may it prove the very turning-point of your salvation.

Our fourth direction is—Hear distrustfully of yourselves, but dependingly on the promised grace from on high to enlighten and to guide you to all truth. It is a grievous obstacle in the way of your spiritual illumination that you have confidence in your own natural powers of discernment; for the natural man discerneth not the things of the Spirit, and God, we read, resisteth the proud. It is well, on the other hand, that you have a deep sense of your own natural insufficiency and blindness; for God, we are again told, giveth grace to the humble. Hear diligently, then, and hear desirously. Hear with special application, and hear withal distrustfully of yourselves and dependingly on God, and you are in that very attitude of waiting upon Him in the way both of prescribed and of well-grounded hope which bids the likeliest for the fulfillment of these precious sayings—He who seeketh findeth, and—If any man keep my commandments to him will I manifest myself.

Our last direction as to how you ought to hear is—That you should hear prayerfully. The former directions, indeed, if followed out, will land in this our concluding one. To hear distinctly, and to hear for himself as for his own eternity, and to hear distrustfully of one's self, and to hear dependingly on God—these affections of the soul must and will find vent in prayer. Prayer is the vehicle of interchange between earth and heaven—carrying up the desires of the heart, and fetching down the dispensations of grace from on high. When the thing asked for is prompted by man's will and agreeable to God's will, there is not one remaining obstacle in the way of its fulfillment but the want of faith. Now, if you are really set on the spiritual and saving understanding of God's word, then are your will and God's will most thoroughly at one. Whatever ye ask

that is agreeable to the will of God, ye shall receive. Now, we read that it is God's will that all men shall be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth; and we further read, that the Scriptures are able to make us wise unto salvation through the faith that is in Christ Jesus. Are you willing, then, to understand the Scriptures for the saving of your soul? God is abundantly willing for the same thing; and when these two wills meet, what power in earth or in hell can stay the accomplishment of that common object which both are set upon? If you are willing for salvation, and God wills you to be saved, where is the let or hindrance, we would ask, in the way of your blissful eternity? It is true that you must have some faith, even though it were as a grain of mustard seed—some such sense of the reality of the whole matter as that what you hear shall not appear to you as idle tales, and you believe them not. But then if you had no belief in what the Bible tells of the unseen things of another world, you would have no desire after them—the very existence of the desire proves that there is some sort of faith within you; and let us not forget the encouragement which our Saviour gives, when He tells us that this faith, even though small as an atom, will open a way for you to the mightiest achievements. Go then in good heart and with confidence to the work, both of reading the Bible and of hearing the faithful expounder of the Bible. Whatever ye ask in the name of Christ, ye shall receive; and if you ask for that knowledge of Himself which is life everlasting, He is both able and willing to do for you what He did for the disciples on their way to Emmaus, to open your understandings that you might understand the Scriptures. The prayer of David, and which availed him, is as available still in the mouth of every earnest inquirer—"Open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold the wondrous things contained in thy law." "Awake, O sinner, and Christ shall give thee light." Awake to the magnitude and reality of these things, and give earnest, prayerful heed to them, and He will translate you out of darkness into the marvelous light of the gospel.

The day will be made to dawn, and the day-star to arise in your hearts.

Let me only add, that beside prayer for yourselves, you should make intercession for others also; and more especially on this occasion, that the house in which we are now assembled for the first time may prove a blessing to the families of its hearers—that it may reclaim many to habits of church-going, and in particular, that those young men who are now given to the wanderings of Sabbath profanation, may be lured, and that from early boyhood, to the wholesome practice of regular attendance on the services of the sanctuary, so that that most pleasing of all spectacles —a well filled family pew—may, as in the days of our goodlier forefathers, be again the frequent, nay, the general object of our delighted contemplation. Above all, let it be our fervent supplication, that beside the bodily presence of assembled worshipers, there may at all times be the presence of a grace and an unction from on high, that both minister and people may be guided to the right exercise of their respective functions—the one so taught how to speak, and the other how to hear, as to have a fruitful issue in the conversion of many souls. Oh! that this beauteous temple may prove the harbinger of what is goodlier still—the Sabbath quiet and the Sabbath sacredness—and most precious of all, the love and the peace and the holiness and all the graces of our coming heaven to those who repair to it. Thus might a little heaven on earth be realized; and long after we, as the seniors of the present age, are moldering in our coffins, may the prophetic blessing be fulfilled on our children's children—That because of this man and that man being born here, righteousness has been made to run down all our streets, and to descend with all the force and fullness of an increasing river from generation to generation.

Before I conclude, let me hope that the lesson of how you are to hear has so far told that one may read out a very few of the most pregnant verses in the Bible, short but substantial, as containing in them the very marrow of the

gospel, that one or other of these may perhaps take effect on the souls of some who are before me. The first I shall repeat, as we read in the Life of Colonel Gardiner, was the instrument of his conversion, letting, as it were, the light of heaven into his mind, and so as that from that time forward he became a new creature in Jesus Christ. Who knows what may be the effect of the simple reading of a few such verses in your hearing now, and more especially if you consider that it is now God speaking from Himself, and not speaking as in the great bulk of a sermon through the lips of the minister?—"Being justified freely by His grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time His righteousness; that He might be just, and the justifier of Him which believeth in Jesus."—"God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."—"God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved."—"As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have eternal life."—"He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?"—"He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him."—"In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him."—"Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that God loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins."—"The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin."—Such, my brethren, are a few declarations from the word of God. Let me close with a few invitations grounded upon these:—"Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways, for why will ye die?"—"Turn ye to the stronghold,

ye prisoners of hope."—"Come to me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."—"Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God."—"Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."—"We then, as workers together with Him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain. For He saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succored thee; behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation."—"Whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely."

May these true sayings of God sink deep in your hearts, and may the Spirit so press them home that they may be to you the bearers of peace with God and of life everlasting, and to His name be praise.

SERMON XXXIII.

[On Sabbath, the 25th April, 1847, Dr. Chalmers preached at the dispensation of the first sacrament administered in the Church of the West Port, Edinburgh—the last sacrament at which he was ever to preside. On that occasion the inexpressible gratification was afforded to him of seeing within a church of his own raising, a goodly number of that very class of the community for whose benefit it was erected, and of knowing that at the table of the Lord there sat down that day about twenty individuals, none of whom for many years before—some of whom not once in the course of a long lifetime—had commemorated the dying love of the Redeemer. Prepared on such occasion, and for such an audience, the sermon which follows has this additional interest attached to it, that it was the last ever written by its author—composed about a month before his death.]

ISAIAH LVI. 4, 5.

"Take hold of my covenant."

We do not enough contemplate the Christian salvation in the form of a covenant, and yet it is often so represented in Scripture. From a very early period indeed in the history of God's dealings with men, this is set forth as the relation in which He and the people who are peculiarly His own are made to stand to each other—we mean, the relation of parties in a covenant, a contract, as it were, having its articles of agreement, its mutual stipulations, its terms of engagement consented to on both sides, and binding upon both. It were well if Christians looked more at this, and dwelt more on this, as being the very condition and state of the matter between them and God,—so that instead of the vague and loose and general views that take no real or practical hold of a man, they were made precisely and distinctly to understand what the obligations are which lie upon each—what the things are, on the one hand, they owe to God; and what, on the other hand, the things are which the great God of heaven and earth has bound Himself to

do for them,—so that instead of this religion of ours floating before the eye of our mind in the form of a slight, shapeless, shadowy imagination, it shall be clearly apprehended by us as an express and definite scheme, both of what man is engaged by promise to do for God, and of what God is engaged by promise to do for man. We know of nothing better adapted for this purpose than to look at religion in the light and under the idea of a covenant; and as we have already said that this is the light in which it is regarded and often spoken of in Scripture, let us present you with a few specimens of this.

Numb. xxv. 12, 13.—"Wherefore say, Behold I give unto him my covenant of peace: and he shall have it, and his seed after him, even the covenant of an everlasting priesthood." This applies, no doubt, to a different covenant from that which obtains between God and us in the present day. Nevertheless I make the quotation because ours has the same characteristics with the covenant of these verses. Ours, too, is a covenant of peace, and the covenant of an everlasting priesthood.

Deut. iv. 23, 31.—"Take heed unto yourselves, lest ye forget the covenant of the Lord your God"—"for the Lord thy God is a merciful God: He will not forsake thee, neither destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers, which He sware unto them." Neither does this refer to our covenant; but I quote it notwithstanding; for neither must we forget our part of the covenant, and God, most assuredly, will not forget His; for ours, too, has the guarantee both of His word and His oath.

Deut. xxix. 12.—"Enter into covenant with the Lord thy God." This is a call on the Israelites, and the same call is upon us now, to enter into covenant with God.

Deut. xxix. 25.—"Because they have forsaken the covenant of the Lord God." Ours, too, is a covenant which if we forsake, wrath will come upon us, as it did upon the Israelites, to the uttermost.

Deut. xxxi. 20.—"Then will they turn unto other gods, and serve them, and provoke me, and break my covenant."

We, too, may turn away from the service of God, and break the covenant into which we have entered, and so incur the fiercest provocation.

1 Chron. xvi. 15.—"Be ye mindful always of His covenant; the word which He commanded to a thousand generations." Psalm xxv. 14.—"The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him; and He will shew them His covenant." Psalm lxxviii. 37.—"For their heart was not right with Him, neither were they steadfast in His covenant." Psalm lxxxix. 28.—"My mercy will I keep for him for evermore, and my covenant shall stand fast with him." Psalm cxi. 5.—"He hath given meat unto them that fear Him: He will ever be mindful of His covenant." Jer. xxxiii. 20, 21.—"Thus saith the Lord, If ye can break my covenant of the day, and my covenant of the night, and that there should not be day and night in their season; then may also my covenant be broken with David my servant, that he should not have a son to reign upon his throne; and with the Levites the priests, my ministers." Jer. xxxiv. 18.—"And I will give the men that have transgressed my covenant, which have not performed the words of the covenant which they had made before me, when they cut the calf in twain, and passed between the parts thereof." Jer. l. 5.—"They shall ask the way to Zion with their faces thitherward, saying, Come, and let us join ourselves to the Lord in a perpetual covenant that shall not be forgotten." Ezek. xx. 37.—"And I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant." Mal. ii. 5.—"My covenant was with him of life and peace; and I gave them to him for the fear wherewith he feared me, and was afraid before my name." 2 Sam. xxiii. 5.—"Although my house be not so with God; yet He hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure: for this is all my salvation, and all my desire, although he make it not to grow." Deut. vii. 9–12—"Know therefore that the Lord thy God, He is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love Him and keep His commandments to a thousand gen-

erations; and repayeth them that hate Him to their face, to destroy them: He will not be slack to him that hateth Him, He will repay him to his face. Thou shalt therefore keep the commandments, and the statutes, and the judgments, which I command thee this day, to do them. Wherefore it shall come to pass, if ye hearken to these judgments, and keep and do them, that the Lord thy God shall keep unto thee the covenant and the mercy which He sware unto thy fathers." Psalm lxxviii. 10.—"They kept not the covenant of God, and refused to walk in His law." Psalm ciii. 17, 18.—"But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear Him, and His righteousness unto children's children; to such as keep His covenant, and to those that remember His commandments to do them." Psalm cv. 8.—"He hath remembered His covenant for ever, the word which He commanded to a thousand generations."

Such, then, are sundry verses out of the many in which the word occurs, and such the various things said in Scripture of a covenant. They will convince you how frequently, or rather how habitually it is, that the relationship in which God stands to His people, and His people to God, is viewed under this particular aspect, and, I hope, will prepare you to listen with all the more attention and earnestness when we proceed to explain what the articles are of that covenant which the gospel of Jesus Christ has overtured from heaven for the acceptance of the world, to which all men are called upon to give themselves, and within the bond of which every true disciple of the Saviour is placed and abides perpetually, mindful of the part which he has in it to the end of his days, till God—never unmindful of His part in it—gives effect and fulfillment to its crowning article, by conferring on the faithful all the glories and rewards of a blissful eternity. Be assured of this covenant that it, too, is ordered in all things and sure—that men may forget and fall away from it, but that God never will—that it is stable as are the laws and ordinances of nature, nay, more lasting than nature itself—that heaven and earth shall pass

away, but that none of its words and none of its articles can fail.

Let us now propound what the terms or articles of the Christian covenant are. They are very distinct, and nothing is required but earnest and serious attention that you may have a distinct understanding of them—and surely nothing should concern you more than to get such an understanding of them. It is stated in one of the verses which we have just read, as a choice privilege conferred on those who fear God, that He will show them His covenant. And can there be aught of more importance, whether in time or eternity, for sinners to know, than what that covenant of mercy is, and what its particulars, by laying hold of which they in fact lay hold of life eternal? To show them this covenant, just as you would lay down and make plain to them the articles of a contract, or an agreement, or a treaty, pointing out to sinners, in so many readable and distinct characters, the way of their salvation—oh! that you felt, then, as you ought, how momentous the subject is of our present explanation. What we want to tell you of are the things done by God, and the things to be done by you in order that you might be saved. These, in truth, are the things which the Scriptures principally teach—even, to adopt the words of our Shorter Catechism, "what man has to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires from him." These might be stated in greater or less degrees of fullness and length—either very minutely and particularly, or very briefly and generally. We shall take the latter way, and speak to you of these things as comprised in a covenant of four leading articles; and just as in any covenant between two parties, certain things are laid upon the one party and certain things upon the other—so in this covenant of four articles between God and man, we should be disposed to regard two of these as standing upon God's side of the covenant, and two of them upon man's side of the covenant.

The first of these articles, thn, might be said to come wholly from God. It is an overture of mercy to our sinful

world, or rather to every man who will consent to enter into the covenant, of which this may be regarded as the first and foremost article. But we are expressing it too vaguely and generally when we call it a mere overture of mercy;—it brings us nearer to the real state of the transaction, and sets it forth in the character more obviously of an article or covenant, when we represent the substance of the overture as being the forgiveness of a debt—and more nearly still, that a Surety has stepped forward and undertakes the payment of this debt, even to the last farthing of it. Even an ordinary debt is often settled in this way, upon a certain specific consideration—generally, as in cases of bankruptcy, on the payment of a composition, but sometimes also on the interposal of a surety who becomes responsible for the payment of the whole. Now such a surety in our case is Jesus Christ, who laid down His life for a ransom, poured out His blood—His precious and peace-speaking blood—as the cost of our redemption, and hence termed the blood of the everlasting covenant. This then is the footing on which God holds out forgiveness to all who will but understand well the articles. He will not grant this forgiveness on any other footing. It is not on the footing of general mercy, but on the footing of a thus purchased and thus propitiated mercy, that He holds out forgiveness. It may have been mercy, the mercy of an infinite compassion, not willing that even the chief of sinners should perish—it may have been God's so loving the world which led to the drawing up of a covenant at all. But now that the covenant is drawn up, it is upon its terms, and upon no other, that the sinner can be taken into acceptance. God will not take into acceptance the transgressors of His law but in such a way as that that law shall be magnified and made honorable. To make provision for this is one great end of the covenant. Christ bare the penalties of the law, and so made an end of sin—that is, of all further reckoning with His own people because of sin, agreeably to what is said of there being no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus. And Christ fulfilled the demands of

the law, and so brought in an everlasting righteousness—a righteousness which is unto all, and upon all who take hold of the covenant. It is thus that, under the peculiar economy of the gospel, truth and justice have to do with the pardon and acceptance of the sinner as well as mercy. It is just in God the lawgiver to exact the penalty of His broken law, but it were not just to exact it twice over—that is, both from the sinner and the sinner's substitute. It is but justice that the creditor should be paid his debt, but not just that it should be paid him twice—that is, by the surety and the debtor both, for justice requires that the debtor should be released from the whole obligation so soon as the surety has discharged it—and accordingly it is a most important verse, and lets us, as it were, to the principle of the Christian salvation—that God is not only merciful, but that He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all our unrighteousness. See then, my brethren, the mighty additional strength and security which it gives to the method of salvation, that it is a salvation by covenant, compassed about by all the guarantees of an express, formal, ratified agreement between two parties mutually bound to each other, or under strict reciprocal engagements to each other. What a condescension to sinners that God hath thus bound Himself, so that they have not only the mercy of God, but the justice and the truth of God upon their sides, as the pledges and the guarantees of their salvation. This is His own express overture, pardon—not out of Christ, for out of Christ He is a consuming fire—but pardon in Christ, for in Christ He is a reconciled and reconciling Father. And there is pardon on this footing to all who will—even the worst and most worthless of sinners are welcome to it, insomuch that the embassadors of God are commissioned to go so far as even to beseech men to enter into reconciliation. This good-will of God in Christ, or more particularly, this mercy of God in Christ, or more particularly still. this forgiveness through the blood which Christ shed for us on the cross, may be regarded as the first article of the covenant which we call on you to take hold of.

The first article, then, being a declaration or promise of forgiveness through Christ from the Lawgiver, may be viewed as a thing brought down to us from heaven, and therefore as a thing on God's part. The second article which we now proceed to explain, being a response to this declaration by those on earth to whom it is addressed, may be viewed more properly as a thing on man's part. Say that the declaration is addressed to each of two sinners—and we have a full warrant for addressing it to all—but for the present, let us only view it as addressed to two, and that the first of these does not believe it—then his answer to it is, No; but that the second of them does believe it—and then his answer to it is, Ay. Or conceive this declaration of forgiveness to be made in the form of an offer, and in this form too—the form of an offer of forgiveness, we are fully warranted to make it unto all. But say, for the present, that it is made to two, and that the first of them, as before, does not believe, then he may well be said to refuse the offer, so that the thing offered is not his; but that the second does believe it, and then may it as well be said of him that he accepts the offer, and so the thing offered is his. Now, this is precisely the footing on which these first and second articles stand to each other in the gospel of Jesus Christ. The man who believes not in Christ, or, which is the same thing, has not the faith, has no part or interest either in its offered forgiveness or any other of its blessings. The man, again, who has the faith, according to his faith so is it done unto him. This fully accords with one and all of the Scripture sayings which relate to this subject: "Believe and ye shall be saved." "Ye are saved by faith." "God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that whosoever believeth should not perish, but have everlasting life." "Christ is a propitiation through faith in His blood." "Ye are justified by faith;" that is, if ye believe ye are dealt with as righteous persons. "The righteousness of Christ is unto all and upon all who believe." It is by faith that you are said to receive Him. The "as many as received Him," are just the "as many as

believe in His name." They who have faith in the atonement, "have received the atonement." It is thus that your faith in Christ constitutes your reception of Christ. Such is the constitution of the gospel—such the nature of the covenant which we call upon you to take hold of. And is it not a right constitution? Could there be any settlement between two parties among ourselves, or between man and man, if the one did not believe what the other said? or could man ever come into agreement with God if he did not believe God? Would God take any man into acceptance and favor who so far affronted Him as to make Him a liar? But let me tell you that God cannot lie; it is impossible for Him to lie—so we read in the Bible; and let me appeal to yourselves, whether the gravity and the sincerity and the deep sacredness—the divine characteristics of this said Bible, be not in themselves guarantees that none of its sayings will deceive you? And what possible interest can the great God of heaven and earth have in deceiving us? If He were bent on our destruction, and really desirous of it, could not He with all ease make this out, without disgracing Himself by a lie upon the subject. But no; He does not want to destroy, but to save you. He is at this moment longing after your return to friendship with Himself, and this with all the tenderness of a parent bereaved of His children. He tells you so expressly in many, very many of His sayings; and, indeed, it is the substance of these sayings which forms what I have called the first article of the gospel covenant between man and God, even that God makes willing offer of acceptance to you; and the second article is, that you should give God credit for this. Only believe in the glad tidings of great joy, that God makes a free offer of forgiveness to you through the blood of His own Son; and how indeed can any tidings, however good, make you glad and joyful unless you believe in them? Receive the peace-speaking message of the New Testament as a true message; for it is only on your holding it to be true that it can bring any peace to your bosoms—it is only when justified by *faith* that you have peace with God through

Jesus Christ our Lord. God hath laid a glorious foundation for His covenant to begin with. What He wants you now to do is to place your confidence on this foundation, yes, and to hold it fast—holding fast your confidence and the rejoicing of your hope firm unto the end. It is indeed a love-inspiring doctrine, that God hath sent His Son into the world to be the propitiation for our sins; but it is a doctrine which can no more inspire love than any other, without faith in the doctrine; for it is faith that worketh by love; and it is only when you know and believe the love which God hath to you, that you love Him back again. We love God, says the apostle, because He first loved us. Set your hand, then, to this second article of the covenant—subscribe to the faithfulness of God—put your seal to God being true—count Him faithful who hath promised, and be persuaded that what He hath promised He is both able and willing to perform.

So much for our second article, which lies, you will perceive, on man's side of the covenant. The third article lies upon man's side of the covenant too. The second—that we have been just treating of—relates to man's faith. The third, on which we are now to offer a very few observations, relates to man's obedience—the new obedience of the gospel, or, which is the same thing, to man's service—not service in the oldness of the letter, but service in the newness of the spirit. It is in conformity to our second article that man believes. It is in conformity to our third article that man obeys. That both are required and both are indispensable, is obvious from the whole tenor of Scripture; and, indeed, both are often comprehended in one sentence, sometimes in one clause of a sentence, as making up the substance of Christianity. Our Saviour at the outset of His ministry made proclamation to "repent and believe the gospel." Paul states the subject-matter of his preaching to lie in repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. God, in making an overture of reconciliation, says —"Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto God, and He will

have mercy upon him, and to his God, and He will abundantly pardon him." Faith and obedience, my brethren, go together—the one forms part and parcel of the covenant as much as the other does: you must yield yourselves up unto God, "Teaching all men everywhere," says Paul, "to repent and turn unto God, and to do works meet for repentance." The religion to which we call you is something more than the commencement of a new hope: it is the commencement of a new life—you cease to do evil, you learn to do well; you, in fact, if it be a real work of conversion, an actual taking hold of the true gospel covenant—you will make a full dedication of yourselves unto God; you cease to be the servants of sin, and become the servants of righteousness, or which is the same thing, the servants of that God who loveth righteousness and hateth iniquity. Be not deceived then. He who subscribes to the covenant, subscribes it in all its articles—yes, and to have the benefits of the covenant, there must be an honest and habitual effort to fulfill all its articles. In the language of our Shorter Catechism, "He turns unto God with full purpose of, and endeavor after the new obedience of the gospel."

But does not this, it may be thought, just place the sinner where he was again, and bring him back to the old covenant of works? He fell from the old obedience of the former dispensation, and where is the security that he will not fall from the new obedience which is laid upon him by the present dispensation? We were told, while under the economy of the law, to do this and live; and still we are told under the economy of the gospel, that unless we do such and such things, we shall not inherit the kingdom of God. Where, then, is the difference between these? and what the security that in like manner, as under the covenant of works Adam fell, so under the covenant of grace every one who enters, or takes hold of it may not fall away?

This brings us to the statement and explanation of our last article in the covenant which we have been calling on you to take hold of. There is something in its very title which explains the difficulty, and we trust will remove it

from your minds altogether. Remember that it is called the covenant of grace; you may very well see how it should be so styled, from its first article, in which the Lord God, merciful and gracious, holds out the offer of a free pardon through Christ, to one and all of us; and you may as readily see how it preserves this character in its second article, in the fulfillment of which all that man does is to give God credit for His offer, to take Him at His word, to do Him the same homage that we render to every honest acquaintance whom we have in this world—that is, that when He speaks we should believe Him. And accordingly it is said of salvation, that for this very purpose it is of faith, even that it might be by grace. But then the third article, the obedience part of the new covenant, the works of the law demanded as before, does not this throw it all back again, and bring us just where we were? No, my brethren, hear our fourth article, and you will find that it is not as before —for that the glorious covenant to which I would have you all to join yourselves, as it begins with grace, so it ends with grace, as it begins on the side of God, who binds Himself in the first article to bestow pardon on all who ask it, so it is completed on the side of God, who, by what we shall call our fourth article, binds Himself also to bestow the Holy Spirit on all who ask it. From first to last, it is altogether of grace. From the commencement to the completion of the new man in Christ Jesus, grace has to do with it. It is grace which lays the foundation, and it is grace also which raises the superstructure, till, in the language of the prophet, the headstone thereof is brought full with shoutings, and we cry, Grace, grace unto it.

By the third article, which requires our obedience, it may be thought or feared that the covenant had fallen from grace, and so it would, were it not that the fourth article brought it up again. True it is that by the one article man stands engaged to the work of obedience; but it is just as true that by the other article God stands engaged to make us both willing and able for the work. He works in us, and so as to set us working: He both makes us like the work,

and makes us strong for the performance of it: He so changes our whole nature—gives so different a taste and such different affections to our inner man, that what was before our dislike and our drudgery becomes our delight; and it is now our meat and our drink, as of our Saviour before us, to do the will of God. He sheds abroad in our hearts the love of Himself by the Holy Ghost; and they who love God love His law. "Oh, how love I Thy law," says the Psalmist, "it is my meditation all the day." It is not the same as before. It is not the same with the new as it was with the old covenant—with the covenant of grace as with the covenant of works. Under the one, the law was given on tables of stone—and the whole bent of our inclinations was against it, so as to make it a hard and a heartless service; under the other, the law is graven upon the fleshly tablets of our hearts, and our affections are enlisted on the side of the new obedience of the gospel. If by the first article God binds Himself by promise to forgive you, by the fourth article He as much binds Himself by promise to sanctify you—to uphold all your goings, and carry you forward from strength to strength in the way of His commandments. It is your part of the covenant that henceforward you shall obey, but it is as much God's part of the covenant that He shall enable you to obey,—and one of the most glorious testimonies to this effect in the whole of Scripture, given first in the Old Testament and repeated afterwards by quotation in the New, first by the prophet Jeremiah, and afterwards by the apostle Paul—a most glorious testimony, and delivered, too, in the terms of a covenant, is the following—"Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant, and this shall be the covenant, that I will put my law in their inward parts and write it in their hearts, and will be their God, and they shall be my people; and I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." Be not afraid, then, to engage in the service—He stands engaged to strengthen you for the service. Be not afraid to vow unto the Lord, He will enable you to pay your vows. Is it your heart's

wish to be good?—it is as much His wish to make you good. Enter into His covenant; take a fast and firm hold, and He will neither be wanting on His part, nor will He leave or let you to fall away from yours, and so you will be washed and sanctified and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of your God.

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